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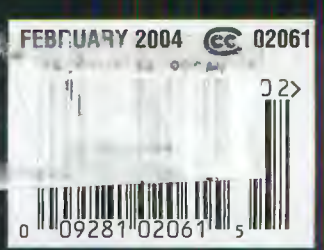
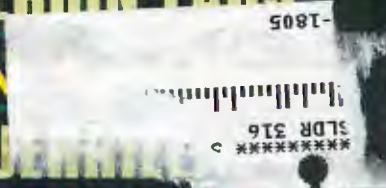
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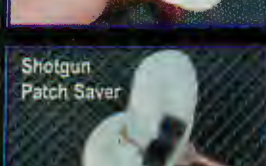
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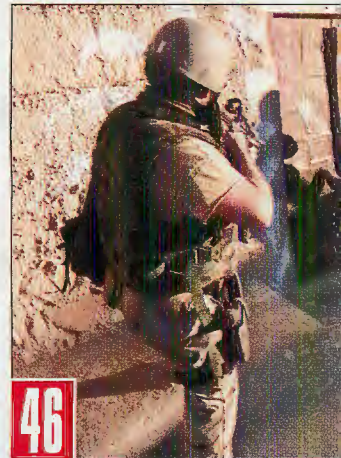
Photo courtesy of Heckler & Koch

On the Cover

Heckler & Koch's majestic new XM8 rifle, in 5.56 x 45mm NATO-caliber and part of H & K's XM8 Modular Assault Weapon System, is a 4-variation beauty which might replace the Army's M16.



REUTERS/Suhaib Salem



Paul Avallone



USMC photo by Sgt. Kevin Reed

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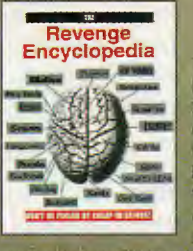
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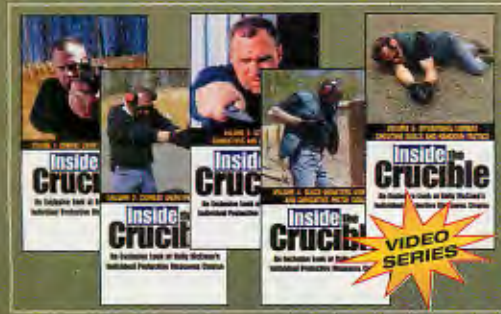
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

BY JOHN WEISMAN

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Memo To Army Chief Of Staff Pete Schoomaker

Dear General:

Now let's see if I get this straight. An officer whose Tikrit-based troops have come under attack from Saddam loyalists becomes aware that an Iraqi detainee has information about a planned ambush of his soldiers, but the prisoner isn't being cooperative.

The officer then goes to interrogate the detainee — an Iraqi police officer, by the way — and in the course of questioning, fires his weapon as a way of making the point that he's serious about obtaining straight answers.

The detainee then tells the truth. The ambush is averted, and soldiers' lives are saved.

The officer is then:

A: given a commendation.

B: promoted to full colonel for showing initiative under pressure and loyalty to his troops.

C: told to resign his commission immediately or face a court martial.

The correct answer, I'm sorry to have to report, is "C."

Lieutenant Colonel Allen B. West, who aggressively interrogated an Iraqi detainee so that he could prevent an ambush and save his soldiers' lives, is being charged with aggravated assault by his unit's JAG officer.

According to published reports, Lt. Col. West allowed two of his soldiers to "physically aggress" the prisoner (an act for which they were later fined), and



John Weisman

then West brandished his pistol and fired two shots to scare the man into talking.

For this, the Judge Advocate General's office wants to end his 19-year career and possibly send him to prison for eight years. Meanwhile, idiot officers who get their men killed are being given medals and promotions, and generals who have never come under fire are putting them-

Continued on page 81

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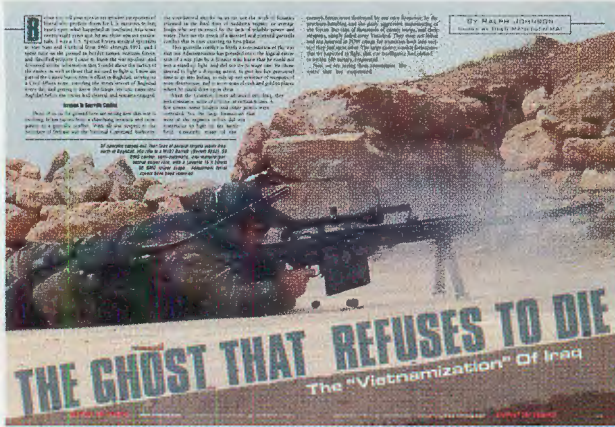


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In the article "The Ghost That Refuses To Die" you picture an SOF trooper with the "M107" Barrett 82A2. I recall reading in SOF the Army had adopted a "BullPup" variant of the Barrett as the "official" sniper 50 cal. designated the "XM 107." What gives?

As to the article itself, BRAVO TO THE MAX! Finally someone remembers their history and correctly interprets it into a great operational concept. Now if only "regular Combat Arms" senior officers could see the operational wisdom involved! Now if someone could come up with a course of instruction that could get them to think and act like SOF troops! Please keep up the great work. I have looked forward to every new SOF issue since issue No. 2.

D. Burchfield
Tidewater VA

According to Barrett, the semiautomatic .50 BMG rifle that was the XM107 has been officially adopted as the M107, and they describe it as "similar to the Barrett 82A1."

Guns Up!

This is in comment to your Command Guidance, where Col. Young said Army units, especially support units, do not show any weapons at all when going out on convoys, and that we are only allowed to carry two mags at a time. I know my ROE, I have the card in my Kevlar. He obviously doesn't have one. Do you think we are crazy? I have been on many convoys and our weapons are on red pointing out the window ready to fire at anything that even looks hostile. By the way I am in a support unit. I know you are wrong about other units too

because I see a lot when we go out and they are just like us. The Army, especially support units, are not a bunch of soft idiots, and the Marines are not God Almighty either. I respect Colonel Young and absolutely don't mean any disrespect, but he is wrong. I still like your mag, though.

andy.cox@us.army.mil

Guns Up II

After reading the Oct. 03 issue Command Guidance section, I felt obliged to make my first correspondence to your magazine. First, I would like to thank Col. Brown for being as straight-forward and to the point as he is. The column he published in his CG was an e-mail from a Col. Bob Young, and the column itself is good, as it brings to light some issues that do not present themselves to the general public. However, it needs comment; One wonders what Army unit he GAC'ed with. I GAC'ed to Baghdad with A3-187, and because our trucks were "bristling" with weapons we responded to a near ambush appropriately. Every time I go out on a vehicular patrol, every time I've been in a convoy, our weapons are "hot," and we roll out with all we can, i.e. M2, MK-19, M240's, M249's, M4 rifles, pistols, sometimes we even have Apache escorts. Never once have I had to ask for permission to lock and load when crossing the wire.

When on the perimeter, I tell my men the first thing they do when they get to the gate, ECP, tower, or bunker is rack that charging handle back, if they haven't already done so. Lately we have been doing interdiction raids and patrols on the border with Syria catching smugglers and looking out for any fleeing-or-returning loyalists. My brothers in the 502nd took down Uday and Qusay, we marched on Baghdad, the list of our combat actions goes all the way back to March of 02. I hope [the units he saw] were not in the 101st. I'd appreciate a better coverage of the Army. Oh, and where are these Marine units that are adjacent to me right now? All my buddies are back home. They say how they miss their families, well, we've been at this for over a year now, and we do, too.

Thank you, and keep putting out good poop. The way it was described in "Command Guidance," ain't like it is around here.

CPL Leibhardt, A 3-187 101st Abn (AAslt)
Freshman249@yahoo.com

This Is Yo' Brain On What?

Many of the same people who used the implanted remote manipulation technology on humans during the 1960's and 1970's for the Central Intelligence Agency also used it on the side outside of the Central intelligence agency for foreign governments as part of those government intelligence operations. Lackland Air force base in San Antonio was one of

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their facilities during that time period and they manipulated people in foreign countries using satellite for the US government. All those operations were blown as those who did the manipulation also worked for British intelligence. The Central intelligence agency was aware of the spread of the technology, monitored for it and covered it up but never went public and fixed the problem. The device straddles your nose bridge and sits in the sinus pockets on either side thus looking natural on a CT scan and MRI. A camouflaged strap goes across the top of the nose bridge on some models so the implant can be lifted out and pulled through a nostril.

starshark_666@juno.com

Thanks very much for sharing this potentially life-saving information. By far the best work published on defending yourself against such outrages is, Aluminum Foil Deflector Beanie, Practical Mind Control Protection for Paranoids, available from Paladin Press (www.paladin-press.com).

GROM

Enjoyed Don McLean's "Thunder from the Tatras" article in the December edition. If possible, out of curiosity could you kindly direct me to any further reference material, web links, etc. regarding same.

Dave Kobus, Aerospace Engineer
Lexington Park, Maryland

There are a number of web sites and links sponsored by Polish and foreign military associations and buffs, and the GROM have been featured multiple times in the Polish and European press. As web service in Poland is still an evolving thing, sites disappear and reappear on a different server. To get all the latest sites and news stories, do a www.Google.com search for "grom." And follow up a week or so later to catch any that may have changed addresses. Some of the "buff" sites have an excellent array of graphics and documents.

Stay The Course

Because President Bush the First and the U.S. Congress lacked will and leadership, we have had to pay again in blood and tax dollars for Iraqi Peace. Do not lack the brains and guts to force Congress to pay to finish the job this time. We are 7/8 of the way there, we cannot later find we must pay a third time.

Philip L. Bancroft
Sudbury, MA

QuickClot

In the December issue Dale Cooper lists QuickClot as ineffective stopping arterial bleeding in one case because the bleeding pushed the compound off the wound. QuickClot won't work just poured over an arterial injury. It only works if a pressure dressing is applied over the wound and held for several minutes until bleeding stops. That is why the Marines are being supplied with a newly designed pressure dressing along with QuickClot in their new first aid kits.

QuickClot was issued early this year as fast as possible to Marines in Kuwait and Iraq, sometimes without enough training in how to correctly use it. The new kits include clear instructions, which might have helped the Marine whose story he tells. However, if the wound was located so high in the thigh that compression was ineffective, QuickClot would not have worked anyway. It will not save everyone, but it is still an advance in field trauma care.

Steve Temerlin
Captain, Medical Corps, USN
3rd Marine Air Wing

Whattza Juliet Bravo?

I am an NCO in the 400th CML DET. We are a "JB Team." But no one seems to know what the "JB" stands for. We collect and process NBC reports, and we plot NBC info on a map with computer software (JWARN). Can anyone tell me what the "JB" stands for? Not even my brigade commander seems to know?

armyabel@aol.com

Sarge, our copy of JCS Pub 1 is far out of date, and there were no listings in our commercial acronyms dictionary, so this is a mission for the eclectic SOF readership (the responses will all start out "don't you dumbshits know what JB stands for?? But we'll get our answer...)

AN/PRC-148

I am a field radio operator (0621) for a Marine Corps Reserve unit that has recently arrived from Operation Iraqi Freedom. I was reading your article, "What worked — What didn't," and noticed the reference to the hand-held radio and its downfalls. I agree with the article that it can be a confusing piece of equipment for those not properly trained or familiar on its applications. It's not, as they say, "Marine proof." It is more commonly known to us as "AN/PRC-148" not "MK148."

However, what better way to prove equipment's limitations than to employ it in real-world operations in the rigorous and unforgiving hands of Marines or other ground-pounders. That's how improvements are made and some things just look better on paper, I suppose. Stay motivated,

Cpl. E.J. Daigle

Show you how old I am, the hand-held we used was called a PRC-6. Yes, the crucible of combat is the ultimate proving ground — even such classics as the Garand went through evolutionary tweaks based on wide experience — but the more thoroughly things are wrung out before issue, the less lives they cost in combat.

SOF solicits your letters by e-mail (editor@sofmag.com), snail-mail (5735 E. Arapahoe, Unit 5A, Boulder, CO 80303) or FAX (303-444-5617). Lashes, laurels, comments, helpful information, questions are welcome. We may edit for space or clarity, and if two letters cover the same subject, the most concise one has the edge for publication. Visit our web site @ www.sofmag.com . ✕

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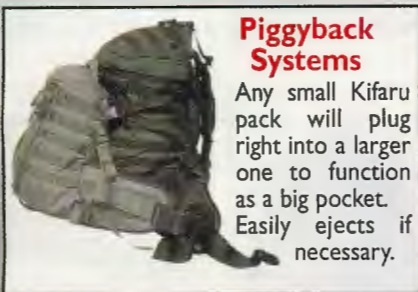
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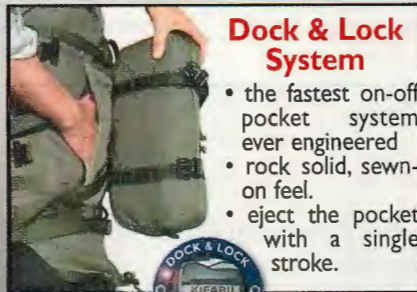
Marauder
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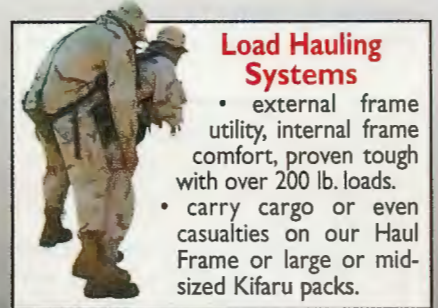
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BULLETIN BOARD

Good On Ya, Steiner!

In response to the numerous requests for binoculars from U.S. troops, and in line with their continued support for troops stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq, Steiner Optics, the good-as-it-gets manufacturer of top-quality binoculars, has initiated a program to help supply U.S. military personnel stationed in these two countries with binoculars for use in the field.

Military personnel stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq whose job description requires binos but are not issued them as TO&E, should submit a letter of 250 words or less outlining reasons why they need a high-quality binocular (REMFs and free-loaders, please don't bother) to:

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Moorestown, N.J. 08057

Specify (within OpSec limits) where you are stationed, the name of your unit or company, and your military (APO/FPO) address for binocular shipment.

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theater where you are stationed, for each request, while supplies last. Optics will be shipped on a first-come-first-serve basis. Binoculars will be in slightly used to well-worn condition, but all optics will be in perfect working condition.

When you're able to put the binocular you receive to good use in the field, Steiner would like to know about it. Send photos/letters to the address above or via e-mail at info@steiner-binoculars.com.

It pleases us here at SOF to help a company who helps the troops out of their own pocket. Their optics are as good as it gets. Remember them when you are in the market for top-quality scopes or binos at a fair price.

Support For The Troops

Because of potential problems with anthrax and other low-life projects, packages are not accepted to "any soldier, soldier, airman, Marine." But that doesn't mean you can't show your support with useful goodies and comfort items. Go to your local VFW or American Legion and see if they have some specific troops who need some mail. Ask around in your church, synagogue or civic group. Call the chaplain's

Support Lt. Col. West

If you would like to sign a citizen petition on behalf of Lt. Col. Allen B. West, U.S. Army, who was indicted on criminal assault charges for the psychological intimidation tactic he used to acquire vital intelligence from a captured enemy combatant in Iraq — intelligence that saved the lives of American soldiers facing imminent attack, go to: sign-colwest@patriotpetsitions.us. For more information on the situation, read this month's guest "Command Guidance" column, or go to: <http://PatriotPetitions.US/colwest>.

"[The enemy detainee] and his accomplices were a threat to our soldiers and the method was not right, but why should I ... be forced into prison for protecting my men?" Col. West asks. Good question. How can we expect frontline officers to fight wars the administration characterizes as "pre-emptive" if they are not given the latitude to respond — pre-emptively — to the asymmetric threats of terrorists irregulars? Would the deaths of American soldiers in the ambush Col. West thwarted at Saba al Boor have constituted a more acceptable result for the Staff Judge Advocate? It may be worthwhile to sign the petition to exonerate Col. West from this grossly misguided criminal prosecution.

And it's always worthwhile to give a tangible expression of your support to: Allen West Defense Fund, c/o Angela West, 6823 Coleman Dr., Ft. Hood, TX 76544. These contributions are not tax-deductible, and for that reason all the more appreciated.



The Washington Times

office of a military base near you. And if these don't find you any specific names, go to www.operationac.com and peruse their website for information on what to send and where to send it and they'll see it gets to the right hands. Go to www.usometrodc.org/care.html and you'll find information how to funnel your support through the USO. Don't give up until you've found the troops you're looking for — they need and deserve tangible evidence that the folks at home care and wish them the best.

Wanted: Authors

WorldNewDaily is seeking contributors for a book, *We Support You! Love, America*, that will be composed of short pieces of poetry, prayers and inspirational/patriotic pieces or other words of encouragement of 250 words or less. The book will be sent to service personnel overseas as an attaboy. For details go to worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=35260.

Communist Party USA To Support Dems

According to *WorldNetDaily.com*, the Communist Party USA will not run a candidate for president, will not support "progressive" third-party bids, but will instead throw its support behind the Democratic Party in an all-out effort to defeat President Bush and the Republican Congress, calling for a "united front" to defeat Bush by major figures and spokes-

men. This is the language employed by the party in the past when it has supported liberal candidates and issues not necessarily under party discipline, notes *G2 Bulletin*.

Deployments Extended

According to DoD the 1-501 Airborne Task Force's deployment to Afghanistan has increased from six to nine months. The 10th Mountain Division's Task Force Warrior, to which the 1-501 ATF is assigned, was extended three months. The news was one of several announcements made regarding rotation adjustments for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

"Deployed units are not driven by timelines but rather by the operational situation and mission," said Maj. Gen. John Brown, U.S. Army-Alaska commander. "The resolve and capabilities of the 1-501 Airborne Task Force are extraordinary. They will meet all challenges."

DoD officials released information on the alert and mobilization of some 41,500 Reserve Component combat arms, combat service and combat service support soldiers for the two theaters.

The second Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, will deploy to Iraq to replace 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. The 25th ID's 2nd Brigade Combat Team is also headed to Iraq. Both units will be there 12 months, unless relieved earlier by the combat commander.

The 1st ID's 1st Brigade's Iraq deployment was extended from six to 12 months.

In Afghanistan, the 10th Mountain Division's Task Force

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Dear Friend,

My name is Jason Marks. I don't want to offend anybody, but **this is the cold hard truth:**

When it's do or die, you need to know **How to Kill** instantly, without breaking a sweat.

Would you like to have those skills, so ingrained, that they switch on automatically when you need them?

If so, **this is going to be the most important thing you ever read.** Here's why:

About 2 years ago, some young punks shoved me against a wall and put a knife to my throat. I thought I was prepared for it but I wasn't. I always imagined I'd be able to handle myself in this situation, but in fact...I **Completely Froze!**

Luckily for me a cop car pulled up and the punks ran away, because I'm convinced that **a Couple of Seconds Later and I would've been Choking to DEATH on My Own Blood!**

You see, when the Grim Reaper appears, he doesn't give a damn about your rank or how good your form is. He's there for one reason only: **to KILL You!**

At that point, you'll be operating entirely on the Lizard Brain, the most primitive "Fight or Flight" part of your brain. You won't have time to "think about it," or do fancy movements that look great in tournaments and movies. You'll automatically do one of two things:

1. **Unleash a rapid-fire barrage of nerve exploding, heart-stopping strikes, or...**
2. **Get carried off on a stretcher...or worse, in a Body Bag!**

I hope you never have to feel your veins turn to ice and your stomach sink as you know, **right then and there**, that you're about to die! But in today's world - it could happen at any time!

Listen. There are lots of great guys selling videos in the magazines that have some really good stuff to offer, but they don't show you **How To KILL.**

The Karate Schools **aren't teaching this, because they can't!** - They have rules, formalities and safety procedures they must observe to keep the soccer moms happy.

The scumbags and criminals on the street have **never** stepped into a dojo - but they **BRUTALIZE, RAPE and KILL every day!**

One Violent Crime every 5 Seconds
- Bureau of Justice Statistics

How do you deal with someone who can do that - and has lots of experience doing it? **HERE'S HOW: you learn what they know - HOW TO KILL and Brutalize without Hesitation or Doubt! It's that simple.** If you can't do what they can do - you're dead! Here's the good news...

Andrew Scott teaches Law Enforcement, Military and Corporate personnel these techniques and charges thousands of bucks for it. It can't be learned from a book, **you must see it in action**, so I talked him into letting me put it all on a video - **that you can watch in a single evening!** **RIGHT NOW** is your chance to get these Deadly Techniques and **Make Them Your Own** for only \$47 bucks!

After you absorb his new video, I'm sure you'll

agree with me - **it'll be the most valuable training video you'll ever own! Period!** And I can Prove it to you!

Why would I say such a thing? Because you'll learn:

1. **How to fire death blows before he knows what hit him.**
2. **The best (& worst) places to strike.**
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"As a veteran Military Police officer, I've been in just about every kind of violent encounter you could imagine...I know this stuff would work."

- Mark Underwood, Dallas, TX

And the most important thing is: **It doesn't matter how old, slow, skinny or clumsy you are, or even how much you weigh! Even a skinny nerd can drop a bloodthirsty thug like a sack of potatoes with these techniques!**

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FREE Bonus #1: "MASTERING FEAR: The Mental Warfare Secrets Audio Cassette" (\$20 list price)

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Phoenix, which is training the Afghan Army, will not be extended, returning to Fort Drum, N.Y., as planned.

They will be relieved by the 25th ID's 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

New Military Publisher

Fledgling publisher Real War Stories is intent on filling the gap left by the larger publishers with quality military fiction and non-fiction. Its mission statement is to be the world's military book marketplace.

"Real War Stories is positioning itself to be a player in the publishing industry. As other publishers get too large and unresponsive more and more people are going to turn to smaller publishers. I think we're going to see a lot of small publishers doing well in the coming years by developing niche markets," noted SOF's Editor/Publisher Bob Brown.

RWS's niche? "Military, in every sense of the word," it's owner, Dennis Cummings, says. "So far we have published books with military themes, however, if a retired colonel wants to write a western, we'll be happy to take a look at that, too. We're here to support veterans, so the stories may not always be military in theme. For example, we have a couple of former Army guys that have sci-fi manuscripts they want to show us."

John "Tilt" Meyer, author of *Across the Fence*, chose Real War Stories on the advice of his fellow Special Forces One-Zero, Dave Maurer. "Maurer gave me their name and said good things about them. We all kind of stick together with people we trust, so here I am." Meyer is just back from launching his book at the annual Special Operations Association Reunion in Las Vegas. "It went really well. Some of the guys read the entire book over the weekend and were really enthusiastic about it."

RWS is also making it its mission to bring back old classics, such as Maurer's *The Dying Place*, long out of print.

"With the success of Tilt's book, we'll be able to put more of our backstock in hardcover and trade paperback," Cummings says. "Personally, I'd love to see Maurer's book in hardcover; it's one of the best fictional accounts of SOG. And lots of people never got to read it the first time."

For more information go to www.realwarstories.com . ☒



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2. JAPAN BOMB WARNINGS: Japanese "to be trampled under the feet of the combatants of Allah" if THEY send troops to Iraq (AFP). FIRST DEPLOYMENT of troops since WWII divides the public.

3. NORTH KOREA DRUG/WEAPONS exchange between North Korea and Myanmar suspected. "Small arms ammunition, artillery and missiles" sent to Myanmar.

SOUTH KOREA INTELLIGENCE LEAKS suspected, providing info to al-Qaeda of U.S. diplomatic and military facilities hosting 37,000 U.S. troops.

4. PHILIPPINES COCA COLA EXEC kidnapped and murdered; one of 100 abductions in 2003 by rebel terrorists to discourage corporate investments.

5. INDONESIA PUBLIC ENEMY #1, Fugitive Zulkarnaen, chief of JI terrorists with "Laskar Khos" (special force) of 300 Indonesians trained in Afghanistan and Philippines plans to bomb tourist hotel and U.S. bank. TERROR TARGET LIST found listing U.S. banks, hotels and schools.

6. AUSTRALIA WARNINGS from al-Qaeda that "cars of death" would not stop because of its involvement in Iraq and East Timor.

1. UNITED STATES AL-QAEDA-linked group, al-Islah, warns U.S. Muslims to flee New York, D.C. and L.A. to avoid major terror attacks. TERRORISM DRILLS with 1,000 Americans and Mexicans from 60 agencies in Arizona. INDICTED: Pentagon's Islamic chaplain head charged with money-laundering and supporting Osama bin Laden and Hamas. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE blasts CIA and other intelligence for overstating terrorism case against Saddam. SENATE Intelligence Committee releases conflicting report, linking Saddam and Osama and 9-11.

7. COLOMBIA URBAN-WARFARE ESCALATES. Tons of explosives seized. NGOs allegedly provide safe haven for FARC in neutral zones created for refugees. Bogota bars in Zona Rosa attacked; 1 dead 73 wounded.

8. RUSSIA ARAB MERCENARY leader in Chechnya threatens terrorist attacks in Russian military facilities in other Islamic enclaves. 25 Russian troop fatalities monthly in Chechnya.

9. CZECH REPUBLIC STING results in arrests of two Slovaks selling seven pounds of radioactive material for \$700,000. Fears mount that terrorists might access smuggled radioactive material for dirty bomb.

10. ITALY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS MOURN largest military loss since WWII. 19 carabinieri police and soldiers killed in Iraq in suicide bombing of military base in Nasiriyah, Sadaam's hometown. EXPELLED: 7 Moroccan and Algerians suspected of terrorist links

14. IRAQ BRIT COMMANDOS (Army SAS and Navy SBS) arrive. RED CROSS closes headquarters after 12 killed in headquarters bombing. ITALIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS blown-up by suicide bombers. OPERATION IVY CYCLONE. U.S. troops retaliate with 500 pound bombs dropped from F-16s and on-the-ground raids. BLACK HAWKS DOWN: Five U.S. helicopters downed by hostile fire in three weeks, killing 39 troops.

15. AFGHANISTAN FRENCH UN worker assassinated in her car. 12 aid workers killed in seven months. NEW CONSTITUTION declares no law can contradict Islam and sheds gloom on women's rights, allowing four wives concurrently.

16. TURKEY ISTANBUL BOMBINGS. Two synagogues blown up by two vans with 400 kg. explosives, killing 25, injuring 300. British Consulate and HSBC Bank buildings blown-up, coinciding with Bush's visit to England. Over 27 dead, 400 injured. OUTRAGED JUSTICE MINISTER tells West it ignored Turkish struggle against terrorism and harbored Kurdish PKK "terrorists" during 15 year terrorist insurgency that killed 36,000.

11. ISRAEL UNKOSHER WAR. Wild pigs with "advanced sense of smell" much better than that of dogs, OK'd by Rabbis for patrol hogs sniffing infiltrators and explosives tests. FRINGE BENEFIT: terrify and outrage Muslims touch unclean hogs be "denied 70 virgins in heaven." (Israel Insider)

12. SAUDI ARABIA COMPOUND BOMBING HITS WRONG TARGET? 17 dead 122 injured, mainly ex-pat Arabs. U.S. intelligence gives timely warning, shuts embassy. Speculation terrorists believed FBI occupied target.

13. SUDAN U.S. EMBASSY closed after "credible threat" in "terrorist haven" and "state sponsor of terrorism." GOVERNMENT denies Hamas and Islamic Jihad, hosted in Khartoum, are terror groups, calling them "liberators"

17. NEPAL INSURGENT MAOIST COMMUNIST PARTY declared as national-security threat to U.S. Maoist insurgency cost nearly 5,000 lives since 1990.

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The SPIRIT

Of The 2nd Amendment In Post-War Baghdad

Armed Citizens Form Core In Restoring Order

BY J. S. MOSBY

While embedded with an American division recently in Iraq, I had the opportunity to witness the practical application of the principles outlined in the 2nd Amendment on the streets of Baghdad. The unit with which I took-up position in the city only a short time before and in the collapse of Saddam Hussein's police state, looting and other general lawlessness had broken out. At the same time, American ground forces were woefully shorthanded.

When elders from the neighborhood approached the commander of our battalion with concerns about the gangs that were beginning to spring up in the area, he was presented with a quandary. The gangs had armed themselves with the cast-offs of the Iraqi Army and the citizens were unsure how to approach the situation now that the U.S. Army was in charge. He wanted desperately to provide for everyone's security and return the goodwill that had been shown his battalion. His troops, however, were already stretched thin, running everything from presence patrols, to guarding gas lines to doing humanitarian assessment and conducting raids for Ba'ath Party hardliners. There simply wasn't the assets available to billet troops in every apartment block.

The local Iraqis who approached him seemed to be reasonable, law-abiding citizens whose major concerns were for the restoration of basic utilities and getting back to work. He called a meeting with them to determine just how they could address the security issue. They were, after all, with the cessation of major combat operations, his responsibility. "I've received orders to inform people to begin turning in weapons," he told me. "No one has elaborated on that, so I'm going to read my commander's intent and I don't think that intent is to disarm law-abiding people and leave them helpless. RPGs, grenades, the kind of things kids could get into, yes. Firearms for personal protection, no."

In fact, at a general staff meeting held at the battalion command center, he and his fellow officers had loudly grumbled in unison that no way were they going to start disarming law-abiding people in light of the situation. Most of these soldiers are gun owners themselves who had wives and family back in the States who were armed for the same reasons. As one officer put it, "I'm not going to deny the good guys the right to protect themselves from the bad guys. Not on my watch, no way."

The local elders gathered and a plan was laid out, beautiful in its simplicity. "All of you have guns, yes?" the Colonel asked. The Iraqis shyly nodded yes, not knowing what the American's intention was. He went on to explain that he had been ordered to round-up weapons of a destructive nature; heavy military items, not weapons people need for self-protection. An audible sigh of relief went up. He went on to explain the situation with security and manpower.

Finally, he asked, "Can you provide security for your own



Specialists Kristoffer Villarreal and Eduardo Flores, HHC 3/187th Rakassans (101st Airborne) take five to read Soldier Of Fortune Magazine after shaking-down renegade Iraqi gun-runners as the 101st grappled for control of Baghdad's mean streets.

neighborhood and not turn it into a shooting gallery, keep things under control and only use what force is necessary to keep the thieves and gangs out?"

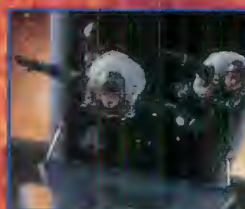
The Iraqis responded that of course they could be responsible in that regard. In fact, they had already started in some ways, explaining that they had been chasing out some bad elements by firing warning shots, which had been enough to send most intruders packing. The gangs were, however, getting bolder and they needed to be able to put some men out to actively patrol the neighborhood and provide a visible presence. The colonel had no problem with this despite the fact that the average home defense firearm in Baghdad is a military AK-47. He wryly remarked, "We call that a Neighborhood Watch."

He then told them to come up with a readily identifiable

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outfit for their men to prevent fratricide. He also pledged that, if needed, he would respond and back them up against any threats that were too heavy for them to counter. The Iraqis were visibly relieved and pleased. As law-abiding people, they instinctively had known what was called for, and had only been awaiting some clarification from the Americans.

This approach immediately began reaping positive results. Looting and robbery dropped-off to almost nothing and burglary, home-invasion and other gangland favorites such as extortion never had a chance to get rolling. At the same time, solid intelligence started coming into the battalion on a daily basis, enabling them to mount raids against gun-runners moving heavy weapons such as RPGs, former Ba'ath Party hardliners and other troublemakers. Not a day went by when elements of the battalion didn't make arrests or move a patrol in to support the local neighborhood watch, until, or course, local hoodlums figured out that the jig was up and departed for easier pickings elsewhere.

By the time the battalion rotated out to a new deployment area, their zone was one of the most stable, despite being one of Baghdad's poorer neighborhoods. When the new battalion arrived, it was a simple matter of pointing out all the areas they were responsible for, make introductions to the local leaders and explain how things worked. As the situation stabilized further, our boys from the original Neighborhood Watch eventually donned new police uniforms and the process of stabilization proceeded.

Since returning from Iraq, I have kept an eye out for violent activity in our old neighborhood and I'm happy to report that it remains one of the most stable areas of Baghdad. While we all know that Americans are coming under almost daily attack in some places, this is the work of organized ele-

ments hostile to the American presence and thus outside the realm of laws or law enforcement and into the realm of guerrilla warfare.

Guerrillas, of course, would have no intention of obeying any sort of firearm-prohibition and are supplied and financed by means beyond the scope of any legitimate authority. To clarify things further, one must remember that Iraq is roughly the size of California. Despite dramatic reports in the media of an impending Viet Nam, the situation is more of a case where if you live in Glendale, Bakersfield is in rebellion and senseless shootings occur daily in LA. That is, admittedly, a simplification of the situation but, geographically speaking, it puts it in perspective.

Thus, in a country that had undergone near total upheaval in the wake of a full-blown war, law-abiding citizens in our area of operations were trusted to exercise their right of self-protection and performed that right with a minimum of incident. Indeed, in the absence of having soldiers posted on every street corner, responsible, armed citizens were the only real option for restoring and preserving social order, much as it was in the wake of Hurricane Andrew. That the honest citizens of Baghdad, had firearms already at their disposal merely simplified this natural process and enabled what authorities did exist to implement it with a minimum of effort.

J. S. Mosby is a freelance war correspondent who has covered conflicts on several continents. He has seen firsthand, in Croatia and Bosnia in particular, citizens in emergencies defend themselves from violent attack with the personal firearms they had at hand, many times in the face of far-better-equipped forces than themselves. ☒

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A Fox OC Incident In SA:

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"My wife drove me to our local shopping mall, so that we could take a short walk. Car transportation for me consists of an awkward process of arranging my frame into a suitable configuration, so that I can plop into the passenger seat. The seat is flat, as I cannot sit. Getting out is even more of an expedition.

"On arrival at the mall parking lot, my wife parked the car and got out to come over to my side to help me. I unlocked my door and opened it partially. Next thing, the door was violently yanked open, and I was confronted by an aggressive, belligerent drunk, who was shouting, cursing, and demanding money. No hesitation on my part! He instantly got a squirt of Fox. My aim was off. The main stream went wide. However, the little he did get was more than adequate! He lurched backward in astonishment. The last I saw of him, his face was buried in his hands, and he was coughing, gagging, and floundering aimlessly on one foot and one knee. My wife and I, of course, left immediately and parked on the other side of the mall. Never saw the guy again."

Lesson: My friend had a plan! The drunk did, too, but the last thing he expected was an immediate and precise counterattack. In the end, a violent encounter was avoided, and my friends are okay. Good show!

Fox OC really works! Highly recommended. I carry it all the time.

And A Further Note From An SA Patrolman Of Many Years:

"Tactical plans always have two parts: The first is to actually have a plan or 'blueprint of action.' The second is always having a means of implementing your plan. This second part is where lots of people see their plan fail. Without it, your 'plan' remains just a theory.

"To this end I have a simple routine that I always follow when performing traffic stops. I make sure both my pistol and my OC are ready for instant use upon exiting my vehicle. This procedure has spilled into my private life. I always make sure that my OC is handy whenever I bring my vehicle to a stop, in other words, whenever I drive my vehicle. I recom-

mend 'practical' OC, like Fox, which is of a size that it is easily concealed in your hand with a nozzle that can be 'aimed' by feel. I have seen more than one officer accidentally spray himself, because he had no 'felt aim' on his OC bottle.

"I also wear a sleeveless jacket. These normally have big pockets. I designate one of them my 'OC pocket.' Nothing goes into that pocket except my OC. Surprising how readily your OC bottle comes to hand (in the correct orientation) when you make alertness and readiness a habit!"

The 6th Commandment

Many friends and students have been troubled by the Sixth Commandment that, "Thou shall not kill." Any confusion over what the admonition actually is, is easily put to rest. Research through *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and several different translations of the Old Testament is helpful.

The clause in question is found in the book of Exodus, Chapter 20, Verse 13. In the King James' Version (KJV), that verse is translated, "Thou shall not kill." In the days when this was written, animals were, of course, killed for food, and there is nowhere in scripture any instructions that this practice be stopped. So, we must examine the Hebrew word that is translated "kill" in the KJV in order to clarify exactly what is meant. Incidentally, it is only in the KJV and several other (old) translations that the word is translated "kill." In the Moffatt Translation, the verse is rendered, "You shall not murder." In *The Living Bible*, it is rendered, "You must not murder."

The Hebrew word translated to the English word "kill" in the KJV is *ratsach* (pronounced "raw-tsakh"). It literally means, "to dash to pieces," and it is never used in context with animals. It refers exclusively to people. In fact, this particular word is used only several other times in the Old Testament, and each time it refers to homicide. A different word is used to describe the killing of animals for food or sacrifice. It is *shachat* (pronounced "shaw-khat").

For example, in Numbers 35:15-16, "Anyone who kills a person by accident may take sanctuary in them [your towns]. But, if he [deliberately] struck the person with an iron tool, so that he died; the man is a murderer; the murderer must be put to death without fail."

The word here *ratsach* translated "murderer" is the same one translated "kill" back in Exodus. Apparently, KJV and

some other translators were not particularly consistent.

Continuing, Numbers 35:20-21, "Also, if he pushes a person, because he hates him, or hides and throws something at him, so that he dies, or maliciously strikes him until he dies, the man who struck the blow must be put to death without fail; he is a murderer."

Again, the same word used in the Sixth Commandment, *ratsach* is translated "murderer."

The word used to describe a public execution of a criminal, such as in the verses quoted above as "to put to death" is *nathan muwth* ("naw-than mooth"). *Nathan* is a form of the verb, to do. It usually means, "to put," or "to make." *Muwth* is a form of the verb, "to die," and it refers to the state of death.

The word translated "kills" in the verse above, where the killing was an accident is, *nakah* ("naw-kaw"). It

From the forgoing, I think it is safe to say that Exodus 20:13 is correctly translated, "You shall not murder."

means to commit a homicide, as does *ratsach*, but it is a softer word and is usually used to describe an accidental homicide, rather than a murder. There is no separate Hebrew word used to distinguish a deliberate, but justifiable homicide from a deliberate, but unjustifiable one. *Ratsach* is customarily used in both instances, much like our word, "homicide."

However, certain homicides are clearly identified as justifiable, as in Numbers 35:26-27, "If the murderer ever goes outside the bounds of the town of refuge where he has taken sanctuary and is caught by the avenger outside the bounds, then the avenger may kill (*ratsach*) the murderer without incurring any guilt."

From the forgoing, I think it is safe to say that Exodus 20:13 is correctly translated, "You shall not murder." "You shall not kill" is an obviously inadequate mistranslation, because its lack of specificity engenders confusion, particularly among grass eaters who would use it to rationalize their own willful lack of preparedness and cowardice.

John Farnam may be reached at JSFarnam@aol.com.

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ONE DAY IN THE A SHAU VALLEY

A Thankless Mission For SOG

BY JOHN STRYKER MEYER

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a condensed version of Chapter 4 of John Stryker Meyer's new book, *ACROSS THE FENCE*, available through Realwarstories.com; P.O. Box 1125, St. Ann, MO 63074; Tel.: 314.291.7975; E-mail: intell@realwarstories.com.

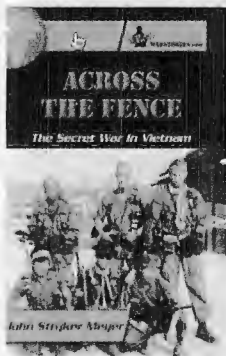
During the Vietnam War there was a secret war fought in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam, that remains unknown today to most Americans.

In *ACROSS THE FENCE*, Meyer, who spent two years in Southeast Asia with Studies & Observation Group (SOG) who, during 1968, operated from one of SOG's six Forward Operating Bases, and a long-time SOF contributor, illuminates one of the most dangerous missions of that clandestine conflict.

For new *Soldier Of Fortune* readers, the following are some unique code names and acronyms that you'll encounter: Covey — Forward-Air-

Controller (FAC); Spike Team — a recon team of indigenous troops led by Green Berets; Kingbees — South Vietnamese-piloted H-34 helicopters (these guys were equal to — or better than — American chopper pilots).

In a book review of *ACROSS THE FENCE*, *The Special Forces Association's Chapter LX Newsletter*, "Tip Of The Spear," stated, "This book belongs in the library of any serious student of the war. It gives added depth [of] understanding to the mission of SOG, and more importantly, of the men who were charged with this thankless mission."



W

ilbur "Pete" Boggs had a problem: He was a man short and the S-3 brass had given him a target in the A Shau Valley designated A Shau 2.

On 1 August 1968, Boggs flew a visual reconnaissance over the target area and located a primary and alternate LZ.

When he returned to camp, he was introduced to Tom Cunningham (*Editor's Note: Tom is a good friend, who during the mid-to-late-'70s was an editor at SOF prior to entering law school.*) who was like every Special Forces soldier at FOB 1 in Phu Bai; he had volunteered to join the Green Berets, volunteered to go to South Vietnam, and after arriving in Southeast Asia, volunteered for the top secret war that was run under the aegis of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam — Studies and Observation Group (SOG), or Command & Control (C&C).

Hot Target

Boggs, the team leader of Spike Team Louisiana, introduced him to the assistant team member, John Walton, an SF medic from Bentonville, Arkansas. Cunningham would carry the PRC-25 FM radio.

On the morning of 3 August, there was a briefing at S-3 for an early morning insertion. Boggs knew it was a hot target. Because the mountains were so high and the morning air was clear and heating up, the Vietnamese helicopters pilots said they would insert ST Louisiana with three helicopters, two men per chopper. The Vietnamese choppers were codenamed "Kingbees."

The H-34s dropped ST Louisiana on a ridge with a



(above) Photo of ST Idaho members in FOB 6, in Nov '68. Cau, Son, Sau, Hiep — interpreter, John S. Meyer, team leader, and Minh. (left) From the left, wearing beret: Col. Jack "The Iceman" Isler, Sgt. John S. Meyer, team leader — One-0, Spike Team Idaho, Lt. Gen. R. Stilwell, Nguyen Van Sau — Vietnamese team leader, ST Idaho, Nguyen Cong Hiep, ST Idaho interpreter, shaking Gen. Stilwell's hand. Lynne M. Black, Jr. ST Idaho assistant team leader — One-One, w/M-60 machine gun.

wooded knoll on one end, an open area around it, and jungle on the other side. Boggs headed the team toward the wooded knoll. Walton was next to the tailgunner for the six-man recon team while Cunningham was behind Boggs in the formation.

Shortly after the team reached the wooded knoll, Boggs told Cunningham to give a team okay, which released all of the air assets assigned to that target. At that point, they hadn't heard anything.

When ST Louisiana moved farther up the knoll Cunningham was amazed at what he saw. There were numerous booby-traps and punji pits set up, he assumed, for Spike Teams. The team continued to move for a few more minutes before settling into a thickly wooded area on the knoll. Cunningham had difficulty making radio contact with the

Covey that was flying several miles away from the area of operation (AO). He finally made contact with an aircraft that had the call sign "Alexander" — just as an NVA unit moved past on a trail that cut through the middle of the wooded knoll.

"You're whispering. Why are you whispering?" Alexander asked.

While Cunningham whispered into his PRC-25, Walton checked-out the wooded knoll. It was covered with dense jungle foliage. He observed the point man give a hand sign that there were NVA soldiers in the jungle at the opposite end of the short ridge near the team's LZ. Walton was sitting at the end of the formation in the thick jungle vegetation with the tailgunner; they both were surprised to hear numerous NVA soldiers moving along the trail.

The noise got the tailgunner's attention. He focused on the area to his right. Walton was sitting in front of him, with the remaining four team members spread out in front of the two of them. As the tailgunner continued to concentrate on the woods to the right, Walton looked past him and saw the bushes shake about 10 feet away. One of the NVA soldiers was crawling up their back trail. As Walton swung his CAR-15 toward the enemy soldier, the NVA popped up, AK-47 tucked under his arm. He had a big Cheshire-cat grin

on his face, knowing he had ST Louisiana dead to rights. The grinning soldier opened fire on full-automatic while Walton was still turning.

Four of the NVA's rounds struck the tailgunner, wounding him severely. Walton's CAR-15 rounds hit the NVA soldier and drove his body backward into the jungle. With the threat temporarily at bay, he began to patch up the tailgunner. Walton dragged him 6 feet up the hill towards Boggs, got him stabilized, and started an IV (intravenous) drip of blood expander. Moments later, the first NVA wave attack slammed into ST Louisiana. The six-man team repulsed it without taking any further casualties.

Fortunately for ST Louisiana, a flight of 101st Airborne Division gunships was diverted from [another] target in South Vietnam toward the A Shau Valley. The arrival of the 101st took the pressure off of the team for a few minutes as Boggs popped a smoke grenade and directed several gun-runs around the team's perimeter. Every time they flew past on a gun-run, the NVA on the ridgeline would jump up and fire at them.

Cunningham crawled to a knoll to get a better view because it was his first contact with the NVA. The dirt in front of his face exploded several times from enemy rounds. Cunningham suddenly thought maybe this wasn't such a good idea, so he backed up. Real fast. After a few more close gun-runs, the helicopters had expended all of their ordnance and returned to their base of operations at Phu Bai.

Napalm Near-Miss

A few minutes later, Cunningham was told the A-1E Skyraiders were on-station. Boggs asked for a napalm-run. Walton was sitting next to Cunningham, on his right, and had just finished patching-up the last of the tailgunner's wounds. Both men were near a clearing. Boggs directed the napalm-run, which struck the ground at the far end of the open area and moved toward ST Louisiana on the knoll. Walton didn't think anything about it. Off in the distance he could see the Spad making its run, saw the canister come loose from the aircraft and tumble toward the earth. After the napalm canister hit the ground and exploded, its forward momentum carried a 1-foot hunk of burning metal up the knoll and over the open area toward Walton and the team. It stopped right between Walton's feet. He sat there staring at



Location — CCN, March 1969, in front of EM Club. ST Idaho after training for special mission. From left front: Cau, Hiep — the interpreter, Hung and Son. Second row from left: Chau, Tuan, Sau and Doug 'The Frenchman' LaTourneau. Back Row from left: Mack Fortenberry and Lynne M. Black, Jr.

the burning metal between his legs for several long seconds. Cunningham was amazed at how close the napalm had come without any of it landing on him, even though he and Walton were just a few feet apart.

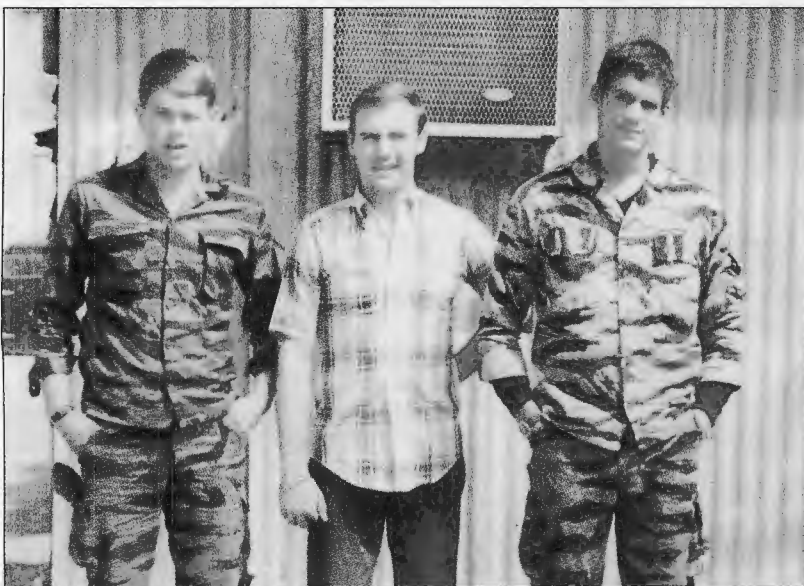
The napalm-run forced the NVA to pull back momentarily, but another wave of NVA soon assaulted the team to Cunningham's left. No one else on the team was wounded. Boggs became concerned about the vacant tailgunner position becoming a vulnerable spot and he ordered Walton to crawl back to where he had killed the first NVA. As Walton moved out in a low crawl, a Vietnamese team member moved into his position next to Cunningham.

Walton moved to the other side of the perimeter. He had crawled about 8 feet, down a slight slope, when a second NVA wave attack hit the team from Boggs' side near the point.

Again, ST Louisiana held. As another wave of NVA moved toward the team, Boggs began to yell to his men that they were being overrun. From his position, only 8 feet away, Walton couldn't see Boggs or Cunningham or the Vietnamese team member who had filled the slot he had vacated. The jungle vegetation was so thick he could only see 1 or 2 feet around him. In fact, the foliage was so thick Walton would see the leaves move first to announce an incoming enemy soldier.

T.C. — And The Others — In A World Of Shit

During that NVA wave attack, Boggs called in an airstrike. He told the Skyraiders to hit ST Louisiana to break the charge. The first 20mm gun run ripped into the NVA and through ST Louisiana's perimeter. Cunningham was in a world of shit and there was nothing he could do about it. The next thing he knew he was 100 yards away, watching himself get hit twice. One round went through his right leg; one went through the radio on his back. Although the



(left to right) John Meyer, Pete Boggs and John Walton, 21 November 1968 at FOB 1 Phu Bai. Photo was taken by Doug LaTourneau, "The Frenchman."

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Now, a Totally Different Program reveals the one constant that allows YOU to not just level the playing field but actually tilt it in your favor... regardless of the odds against you.

by Paul Thomas

You round a corner... and suddenly a huge hand grabs your shoulder. The grip is so intense all you feel are daggers of pain down your back ... and that knife resting against your throat.

Say 'hi' to Jake... twice in prison for armed robbery, life for this sociopathic scumbag has gone to hell and you're about to become the reason he's headed back...

"Oh shit, what do I do now?"

If that's your reaction... don't feel bad. It's almost everyone's response... regardless of background or training!

It isn't your fault. It's just that nothing has prepared you to handle worst-case, over-the-edge violence... the kind you expect to see only in PRISON. But what's frightening is this: crime stats show 83.7%... nearly everyone... will face this nightmare at least once in our life... and it won't be in prison!

Wouldn't it be nice to never worry about Jake? To have that voice inside confidently say, "Hey, if something happens, I've got it covered! Doesn't matter. He's got a pipe? So what. A gun? Not to worry."

A fantasy? Not any more. Tim Larkin, creator of *Target-Focus™ Training*, the #1 rated self-protection system in the world today, gives you just that.

In a daring move with potentially serious ramifications, he's released a WEAPONS-focused version of his *TFT* system that shows you how to defeat a violent criminal in a **WORSE-than-worst-case scenario** -- in prison! After seeing his program... a life-or-death confrontation in a dark alley is a piece of cake.

Not only does this new series take you inside the criminal mind, it goes way beyond... showing you how and why you must first learn to USE a weapon... if you ever hope to defeat a criminal using it against you! Highly unconventional and extremely controversial it teaches you how to get your focus off the weapon... and onto defeating the REAL threat.

Packed into a tight video series, it's cold, calculated and very straightforward. There's no hype or bullshit. Just a total focus on dealing with violence.

You'll be shocked at it's focus on action and simplification. A criminal is all about simplicity -- "just stab him." Complicate how you deal with him and his simplicity wins... every time. That's part of why this system is unlike anything you've seen before!

But the program isn't about posturing, then getting into say, a knife fight. You may be good at knife fighting. Who cares. The real issue is: if you're involved in a violent crime and you need to bash someone's head in to save your life... can you do it?

Jim, a highly ranked spec op guy who saw parts of the videos noted, "If I ever walked through the gates of prison this is exactly what I'd need to know." And before you snicker about "never being in prison", remember this: run into Jake... and you ARE there!

During filming a woman holding the boom mic commented, "You can't show that. It's illegal!"

WRONG! That's why Larkin released his new

material in this format. Virtually everyone puts rules or restrictions into their self-protection system -- often without knowing it. Face a predator without morals or rules like yours and you're screwed. When it becomes life-or-death, you need to be able to go whole-hog... and this new program shows you whole-hog -- plus!

These videos will instantly change your mindset on how you picture yourself in a violent confrontation ... regardless of your training or whose videotapes you've watched. Even the military ones.

That's the world Larkin comes from so he knows it intimately. Yet he spends little time talking about his years as a spec op Naval officer because that just focuses on what he's done... and not **what YOU get** from his system!

He's quick to note that military systems notoriously are outdated and inefficient when dealing with on-the-street criminal violence. Sophisticated weapons and proficient operators mean hand-to-weapon training takes a back seat. Fine for them... bad for you.

It's why even though he trains military, government and law enforcement he's focused his efforts on worst-case civilian violent confrontations with dramatic success. He's trained individuals around the globe (in 2003 in Europe, Mexico and Australia, and even on a private cruise ship in the Baltic Sea); next year it's the Middle East and Asia. Real violence in the US often pales compared to the everyday international violence he's called in to prep for.

But terrorism and escalating violence in the US has compelled him to release his material in a dramatic new format. **There's nobody that's ever shown it like this.** Not even the military. Everyone is terrified of public reaction.

Larkin's take: you must know what gives you the greatest chance for surviving a lethal confrontation. "If it saves one life... it'll be worth the hassle I know I'm setting myself up for. To competently fight someone with a weapon you need to know how to fight with one... intimately. Now you're gonna see it."

Where others show you how to avoid a knife, he shows you how to work with and against it. They wind up **empowering the knife. He puts you in command!**

Some foolishly feel this stuff is too violent, ignoring the fact you don't need to push it to levels shown on these tapes. You can always ramp it down. It's just that you **can't ramp it up and kill someone if you've never done that before.**

Still he's taking a huge risk and will catch a lot of flack. Violence is ugly, vicious and upsetting and you'll see lots of disclaimers running across the screens of these videos. Some will be shocked, dismayed, offended and **outraged that anyone would dare show this stuff.** They'll raise a huge stink... and do everything possible to get this yanked. But better you see this on video than have Jake show you in real life!

Everything you'll see here is vintage *TFT*. You learn to hurt someone very quickly (every sequence shows killing movements right from the start). There's no size, speed or quickness required. Anyone can learn

this because it's based on principles not one person's skills.

Guys that have been in the trenches for years, those who have seen everything, are blown away by the simple brutality and effectiveness of this system, by its total focus on YOU and the competence of Larkin's instructors, including their knowledge of anatomy and how to inflict trauma on the human body. Each instructor averages 10 years of training, and Larkin himself has taught over 5,000 individuals worldwide.

Surprisingly most of his instructors aren't 'jocks'. Many have advanced degrees; five hold PhD's! When he says *TFT* is **built on science**... he isn't bullshitting. His advisory board includes two medical doctors who assure Larkin and his instructors offer accurate, scientific based, up-to-date information about inflicting trauma on the human body (that's why his system is so devastating: you learn not only the HOW... but the WHY).

Unfortunately a program this controversial isn't for everyone. If you think seeing what it takes to survive in prison is overkill, that it's "too lethal" or "too violent"; if you're uncomfortable using a knife or dealing with how people try to kill you; if you think this program's about some predetermined movements or that you're gonna see lots of cool setup techniques -- you can stop reading here.

This stuff WILL set your hair on edge... but realize a criminal on the street (or locked up in the pen) already knows this... he lives it every day. He doesn't need some video to learn from. That's why Larkin doesn't worry about this getting into the wrong hands. It's already there. You're the one who needs to see it. And now... for the very first time... you can.

Listen. I understand you may find all this hard to believe. Before I saw these videos that's how I felt too. Unfortunately there's not room here to adequately describe the **shocking reality of what Larkin has created for you.** That's why he's not asking for a penny of your money now. Instead he'll spend his own cash to put a detailed Special Report into your hands that will prove everything you've just read and explaining more about why this program is so **TOTALLY DIFFERENT** from anything you've ever seen before.

All you need to do to get his **FREE** report is to pick up the phone and call **888-811-9347**. There's a short recorded message and then you can leave your name and address so the report can be mailed to you. Since it's voicemail you can call **24-hours a day, 7 days a week** and no one will hassle you.

Don't fool around and miss this opportunity. It doesn't cost you a thing. So go on-line or call right now.



Tim Larkin, creator of *Target-Focus Training*

radio was destroyed, it saved Cunningham's life. Boggs got hit with shrapnel from the exploding PRC-25. The Vietnamese team member who was sitting where Walton had been was killed instantly. The rounds detonated the frag, smoke and CS tear-gas grenades on the Vietnamese team member. The shrapnel knocked Boggs into semiconsciousness.

The gun-run broke the NVA wave attacks against ST Louisiana. It also left the team in a plume of tear gas, and smoke from smoke-grenades, weapons fire and the earlier napalm-run. The NVA probably felt the conditions around the team perimeter were far more deadly than facing the gun-runs from the Spads and gunships.

Walton performed a quick triage on Boggs and Cunningham. He found that while the explosion of the 20mm round had left only a single piece of flesh holding the leg together, it had seared a good portion of Cunningham's wounded right leg, actually helping the situation by keeping the loss of blood to a minimum. The medic pulled out a green cravat for a tourniquet. He used his knife to twist the bandage tight above the stump to stem any further bleeding. Walton also treated Cunningham for severe throat burn from the CS gas.

Realizing the PRC-25 had been destroyed, Walton reached into his pocket and pulled out the URC-10 emergency ultra-high frequency radio and called Covey. He reported one dead, three wounded and that if Covey was going to get them out, he had to do it ASAP. Walton didn't have the luxury of spare seconds to think about the short distance he had crawled earlier; those 8 to 10 feet had saved his life.

Cunningham, still watching himself from far away, heard someone on a radio calling Covey saying there were two dead. He thought he'd better find out whether or not he was alive. The Green Beret had a unique test to find out. He yelled. It sounded like it was far, far away, but he knew that he was alive. The yell also ended Cunningham's out-of-body experience. He returned to his body lying on the ground. Cunningham knew that he had to help himself. The more he did, the better it would be for everyone.

While Walton worked to save Cunningham's life, Covey directed a series of deadly airstrikes around the knoll where ST Louisiana was fighting for its life. Walton returned to the UCR-10 to tell Covey that two of the three wounded were in serious condition and requested an immediate extraction. Covey rider Pat Watkins told Walton to move the remainder of the team closer to the open area along the ridge.

The airstrikes gave ST Louisiana a brief lull in the fighting, enabling Walton and the one remaining unwounded Vietnamese team member to move the wounded closer to the clearing. Watkins told Walton that he was going to direct a series of strafing-runs by Air Force F-4 Phantom jets and that the first Kingbee would land to pick up the most seriously wounded, and that a second, and third, H-34 would extract the remainder of the team.

Walton and the Vietnamese team member moved the tail-gunner out from the treeline into the grassy area, while Boggs assisted Cunningham. As soon as the NVA heard the Kingbee, the activity picked-up again. The wounded were moved out to the open area where the grass was only 6 inches tall. There were constant dirt spurts kicking-up all around from enemy gunfire.

Captain Think, of the 219th Vietnamese Air Force, piloted the first Kingbee and landed with the right strut only a few feet from the wounded members of ST Louisiana.

Boggs assisted Cunningham to the steps of the Kingbee, but he turned around to fire at the charging NVA. Cunningham didn't want to get shot in the back, so he used

his stump to climb aboard the H-34. He crawled to the back of the chopper, thinking he was finally safe. The four-times-wounded team member joined him. The Kingbee lifted-off.

About the same time, Walton realized that the second Kingbee wasn't heading toward the LZ as planned and that the NVA continued to pour heavy small-arms fire toward Walton, Boggs and their brave Vietnamese counterpart.

Walton knew why the plan called for using three Kingbees for extraction; the weather was hot and the LZ was on a mountain range in the A Shau Valley. The heat and the height of the mountains reduced the lift-capabilities of the helicopters, especially in the hot morning sun. Walton radioed Watkins, asking where the second Kingbee was and Watkins told him the pilot wouldn't go into the LZ because there was too much enemy ground-fire.

Walton felt sick. The question of weight had forced the team to leave the dead Vietnamese team member behind. His added weight might hinder the chances of the living team members being successfully exfiltrated.

"Kingbee Go Down!"

Walton and his counterpart scanned the sky for a helicopter. None were in sight. The NVA continued to maneuver toward the exposed trio from ST Louisiana. Walton knew the situation looked pretty bleak.

Then on the PRC-25 he heard: "Kingbee go down!"

It was Captain Think! The Kingbee came spiraling down on full-autorotation before flaring into the LZ. Think plunked it down on the ground right next to the remaining members of ST Louisiana.

Walton and the Vietnamese lifted Boggs aboard the Kingbee and then moved to the open windows on the starboard and port sides to fire at the NVA, some of whom rushed the aircraft.

Sure enough, the load was too heavy and Think couldn't lift-off. So he lifted the back wheel off the ground and started rolling downhill, gaining as much air speed as possible, while the NVA fired at the chopper. At the last possible moment, Think nursed the aging Sikorsky over the trees. Unfortunately, the chopper didn't have enough speed to gain the altitude needed to fly out of the mountains so Captain Think dipped down into a valley to build up more. Finally, he got the transitional lift he needed to climb out of the mountains and out of the A Shau Valley.

Because Cunningham had used his stump to get aboard the helicopter, it had started to bleed heavily. He began to fade in and out of shock, yet he never fully passed out. It was obvious he would have to tough it out.

Walton used another cravat as a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. Walton had only carried one IV with him that day and he had used that one on the wounded tailgunner. From that day forward, Walton always carried several IVs on all targets.

When the Kingbee landed at the medical facilities in Phu Bai, Cunningham was taken out of the chopper, as he put it, bare-assed naked. When Walton and the Vietnamese team member carried the wounded Vietnamese into the Army medical facility, someone told Walton that they didn't treat Vietnamese. Walton told them to treat *that* Vietnamese, or there would be hell to pay.

For Walton, the drama continued. When they got Cunningham inside, he was barely hanging on, due to the loss of blood and trauma from the amputation. One of the young doctors got nervous. He had never had a dirty, sweaty grunt from just out of the field sticking his nose into his business. When Cunningham's blood pressure was so low

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by Frank Sherrill

I was the total skeptic. Not only had I lifted weights for years, but after 21 years in the martial arts and several more in the military, I thought I'd seen it all. So I just didn't believe **Matt Furey** when he said you can get kick-butt fit with bodyweight calisthenics, that I figured I went through in bootcamp. Besides, I could bench 400 and squat 625. So there's no way I was going to fall for a routine that I figured I already knew. Been there, done that!

But I couldn't shake this feeling that Furey might be right. I had read about the **Great Gama** of India, a wrestler who followed this program and was unbeaten in 5,000 matches. In terms of size and strength, he was amazing. He was 5'7" and 260 pounds of streaming steel. And that was in the early 1900's - long before steroids.

I had heard that **Bruce Lee** did the exercises Furey teaches, too. And we all know about Lee's incredible ripped, lean, muscular look. Not to mention how lightning fast and fluid he was.

I had heard that **Herschel Walker**, a Heisman Trophy winner and All-Pro Running back did 500 pushups and situps each day. So that made me think even more.

And then the final straw was when I started to read all the testimonials that Furey had collected from fellow military (I have included several of them in this article).

And then, of course, there is Furey, the author of **Combat Conditioning** and the man GRAPPLING magazine dubbed "The King of Catch Wrestling." Furey has been featured in major martial arts magazines around the world, has been on the cover of several - and is certainly no slouch when it comes to having and using functional strength. He was a world champion in Shuai-chiao kung fu and a national collegiate champion wrestler. Something told me he had to be telling the truth.

I figured the only way I would ever know for sure would be to get the program and use it. I told myself that if what I was reading was nothing but marketing hype - I would not only be angry - but I would let everyone in the world know about it.

So I bought Furey's **Combat Conditioning** book and read it. In the book he challenges the readers with a test. 100 Hindu squats, followed by 50 Hindu pushups, then a one-minute back bridge.

Figuring this would be easy, I got started. At 40 Hindu squats my thighs were blitzed. It took about 90 seconds; not long compared to my squat routine at the gym.

Next, I tried the Hindu pushups. Funny thing is my legs were still shaking. I dipped down and pushed back. At 15 my arms were throbbing. This couldn't be. No way. **I could bench like there's no tomorrow and this exercise was nuking me.** I gave up at 27 reps. This took about 1.5 minutes, so my workout had only been 2.5 minutes long.

Then the bridge. After three unsuccessful attempts of ten seconds, I gave up. The next day my legs, chest and arms were sore, but in a good way. I thought my legs got 10 times more work with weights, but I was wrong.

Over the course of three months my body changed big time. In fact, I've made a list of 12 of the most amazing benefits that I and thousands of others all over the world have gotten from the **Combat Conditioning** program. I'm betting these are important to you, too:

1. I blow-torched off my excess body fat so quickly that I could eat more than I normally did and still look better than ever.
2. I packed and chiseled functional muscle onto my legs, chest and back that I've never had before, even from weights.
3. I simultaneously doubled my strength and flexibility - and did so without needing separate workouts for each.
4. I quadrupled my endurance inside of 30 days. Just think how much this helped my sparring. No matter what, I NEVER get tired.
5. The chronic back and shoulder pain I had from years of heavy squats, deadlifts and bench pressing went away within a couple weeks. And much of that pain had been with me for nearly 10 years. It's GONE now.

6. I sleep like a log. Eight hours of deep sleep is no longer a goal. It's automatic. As soon as I hit the rack I'm out like a light.
7. My self-confidence knows no bounds. Especially when I got compliments from people who hardly paid attention to me before. I honestly believe there is nothing I cannot do. I'm on top of the world.
8. I can train anywhere. I don't need more than a few square feet of carpet or pavement and I'm all set. I have absolutely no excuses and my body is loving me for it. I don't need any equipment. Just my own bodyweight.
9. I get a kick-butt workout done in 15 minutes or less. Sure, I could do more - but I've gotten incredible results with this amount - so why ruin a good thing?
10. I've turned back the clock. My friends tell me I look 5 - 10 years younger. Awesome!!
11. I have an explosive type of strength that weights couldn't give me. My movements are super fast even when I'm just screwing around.
12. My muscles are like a pliable and powerful tiger - ready to pounce on prey in a heartbeat.

So there you have it. The 12 reasons why **Combat Conditioning** is the best fitness program on the planet. But forget about me.

Take a look at what some others in the military have to say about this program:

Matt, I am a US Marine stationed overseas. I am also a wrestler/judoka and the Marine who developed the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. I use your courses regularly. I like your no-nonsense approach. Particularly as I get older, bodyweight exercises are quick, flexible, all-encompassing and convenient. Keep up the good work!
Lt Colonel George Bristol - USMC

Mr. Furey, We have been applying the principle of 'mastering your own body weight' to our football program and have been pleased. A 12-1 championship season last year was our reward. Thank you sir.
Bonner Cunnings
Yosemite, CA

Dear Matt, When I got your book, I changed my whole way of thinking about how one should train for Combatives. I am now totally off the weights, and, to tell you the truth, I have never felt better or been more flexible in my life. I feel great and have lost no size, strength, or muscle mass... as a result I scored the maximum number of points on the Army Physical Fitness test. HOOAH! You are doing great things, and I and the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School owe you a lot.
TREAT'EM ROUGH!

CPT Judd D. Mahfouz - Infantry

*Dear Mr. Furey, Let me say I have benefited a lot from both your **Combat Conditioning** and **Combat Abs** book. I am a Marine stationed on Okinawa, Japan and I do a lot of kickboxing and NHB fighting on the side. Your exercises have given me a tremendous advantage and combined with my other routines (shadowboxing, sparring, bagwork, wind sprints, and grappling drills) have gotten me into the best shape of my life.*
LCpl Sandor Devenyi - United States Marine Corps



Matt Furey, author of the best-selling **Combat Conditioning**.

*Dear Matt, Being a U.S. Marine in a field unit, I spend much of my time in Physical Training, and I'll admit, I thought that I was in peak physical condition. 2 months ago I began your **Combat Conditioning** program and quickly realized that I had been missing something. While platoon PT consists of mostly running and incorporates some bodyweight exercises (i.e. pushups, pull-ups, crunches) I had been spending the bulk of my personal training time in the weight room, lifting heavy. It embarrassed me the first time I tried to do a reverse pushup and couldn't. I haven't set foot in the weight room in the last 2 months. My 3 mile run time has dropped to below 18 minutes, I've lost a good 10 lbs and my body fat has dropped 4%. You can see the difference and God knows, I can feel the difference. I've introduced the rest of my squad to your program. Thanks for helping us kick ass and take names in a hellish and unforgiving manner.*
D "Bubba" Byng - LCPL, USMC
"Golf" Co, MCS Battalion

Matt Furey's **Combat Conditioning: Functional Exercises for Fitness & Combat Sports** has 48 super effective bodyweight exercises along with seven different programs that will get you into kick-butt shape fast. Be one of the first 25 people to order and you'll receive 3 free **Special Reports** on how to eliminate knee, back and shoulder pain.

Your total investment in this no nonsense book is only \$29.95 plus \$6 S&H U.S. (foreign orders add \$12). Order online at www.mattfurey.com. Or pick up the phone right now and call 1 813 994 8267 to order.

You can also send a money order to Matt Furey Enterprises, Inc., 10339 Birdwatch Drive, Tampa, FL, 33647.

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they couldn't get an IV into him, Walton told the doctor to do a cut-down: Cut into the vein, expose it, stick a catheter into it and tie it off with a suture.

The doctor soon realized the medic wasn't leaving.

Later that night, after Walton had showered and shaved, he was playing poker in the Green Beret Lounge at FOB I. Being left-handed, when Walton dealt a hand of poker he held the deck in his right hand. As he dealt the cards around the table, someone noticed a flesh wound across his right wrist. Walton was asked what had caused the crease in his wrist, the poker game came to a temporary halt. Most of the men playing that night were on Spike Teams, or were Covey riders and had spent time on the ground.

Finally, Walton said that during contact with the grinning NVA soldier who shot the ST Louisiana tailgunner, one of the rounds from his AK-47 had creased Walton's wrist as he was turning his body toward the NVA soldier to kill him. Everyone sat there for a second, amazed at how close Walton had come to being shot and just how fortunate he was that the NVA's round hadn't inflicted a more serious wound. Walton just shrugged his shoulders and the game continued.

Early Sunday morning, several of the guys from FOB I drove over to the hospital area to visit Boggs, Cunningham and the tailgunner. Boggs wanted to get back to work, although he had many bandages on his face, arms and chest. They slipped him a bottle of his favorite whiskey and talked in general terms about what had happened on Saturday. Boggs focused on Walton's efforts, Cunningham's stoicism and Kingbee pilot Captain Think's fearless and amazing extraction. Gordon Martin, an SF medic from FOB I, gave Cunningham his lighter.

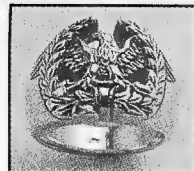
That was one of the few things that went with Cunningham when he finally left Nam.

In the next issue of SOF, read how Walton and Cunningham met the heroic Kingbee pilot, now Colonel Think, during 2003 — their first personal contact since 1968, at a reunion for the Special Operations Association, a group founded by the men who ran recon in SOG and C&C. At that gathering, nine Kingbee pilots received several standing ovations from the Green Berets they rescued during eight long years of top secret SOG missions. ☒

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GUERRILLA

Each war brings with it new ways of fighting. Some tactics drawn on methods used in previous struggles, and some are unique to the combat at hand. What follows is a review of some of the tactics being used by America's guerrilla enemies in Baghdad and vicinity.

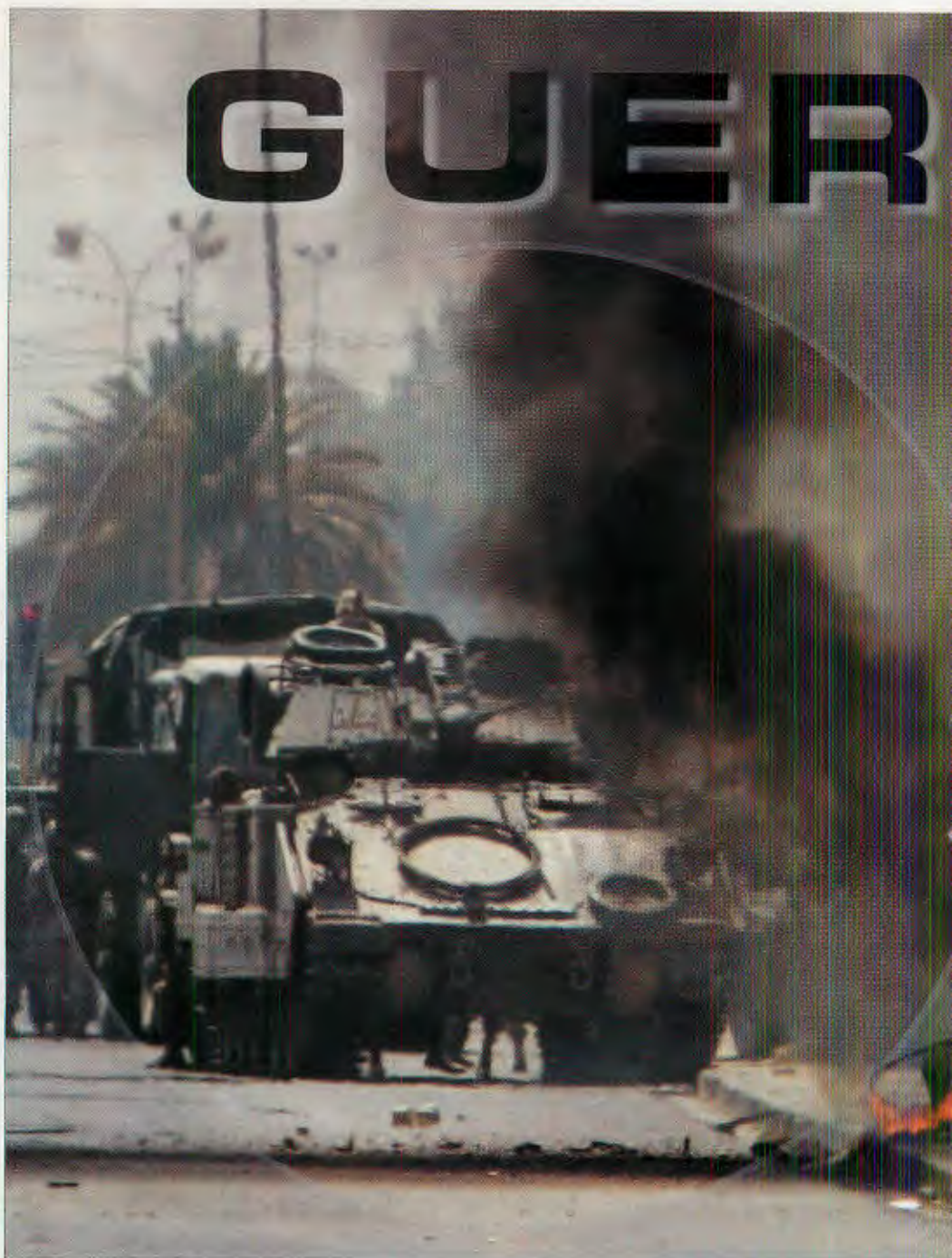
DISMOUNTED SCENARIOS

The Friendly Mob: This is a scene familiar to soldiers who have reason to go into the city and mingle with the populace. It may be an assessment of a clinic, or a meeting with a local official, but there are times when it is necessary to meet with the locals. You pull up in front of the building that you need to visit, dismount, and then, as if by magic, you are immediately surrounded with dozens of Iraqis. Most of this crowd are children, and they want to know your name, have you give them MREs, or sell you Pepsi, or all of the above. They close in, all of them in your face, all demanding attention; loud, pushy, distracting. Then, seemingly from nowhere, a soft drink can sails into the air and lands at your feet. You notice that it is smoking, and then it explodes.

The Counter: Keep them back. You will need to be firm here, and it may not win you hearts and minds, but your first mission is to come home alive, so stay tough.

Make hand gestures to stay back, and learn the simple Arabic commands. Turn your rifle sideways, and use it to push them back. They'll get the message. A good distance is about 12 feet or so, sufficient to allow you to see their hands and react. The best method, however, is to not get involved in conversation while you are on guard. Do not respond to questions, and present a businesslike demeanor. They will usually let you alone.

The Capper: You have been in Baghdad for a while, and things are getting tedious. Your duties take you into the streets, where you pass stores and restaurants every day. What would be the harm in doing a little shopping, or stopping for a cold drink? The harm is that this is another method of Darwinian selection. Nature weeds out the stupid. We have had nice, friendly young soldiers, in body armor and with helmets, shot in the back of the head while shopping or



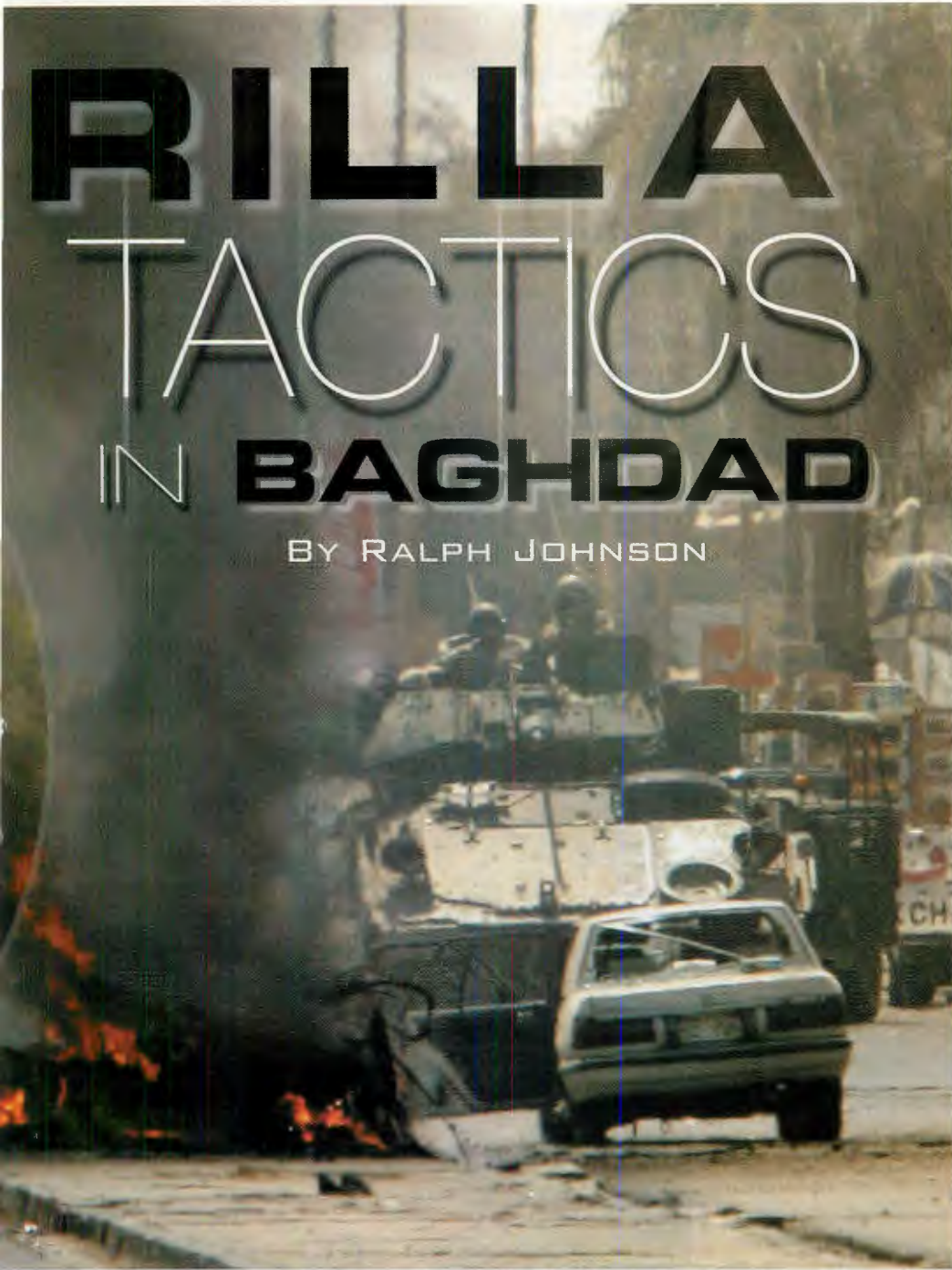
stopping for a soda. The murderer is concealed in the crowd, takes a few seconds to place the pistol and fire, and then slips back into the crowd.

The Counter: Never let down your guard. Listen to the Chain of Command and intelligence reports about no-go areas. If you must make shopping stops, approach these like any other mission: have your security out, and watch your back. *Never* go alone. Don't get separated any more than an arm's length from your buddies when in crowded places. Your preferable stance is back-to-back, weapons out.

The Wounded Woman: This tactic has a few variations, and can be employed against you also when you are in vehicles. This involves an indigenous woman or child lying in the street or on the sidewalk, apparently wounded. Women and children are used because of the Americans' inability to

IRILLIA TACTICS IN BAGHDAD

BY RALPH JOHNSON



REUTERS/Oleg Popov

A U.S. Army Humvee burns in the middle of a street in the center of Baghdad, 7 August 2003. Iraqi guerrillas fired a rocket-propelled grenade that set ablaze the U.S. military vehicle in central Baghdad, inflicting U.S. casualties. (below) A dead Iraqi bystander is dragged away by two friends after he was killed by U.S. soldiers, who opened fire following the attack.

call it in. The local emergency services can attend to it.

Shadow Sniper: This is a replay of an old tactic. The sniper uses an old building with windows or walls blown out, hides within the shadows inside, and does not give himself away by protruding his weapon or muzzle flash outside of the building.

The Counter: If it is within your authority, bring down these types of buildings, or close-off the openings. If on patrol without armor, attempt to avoid line of sight exposure to these types of buildings. A well-placed M-203



REUTERS/Oleg Popov

resist a helpless victim. The patrol approaches, and notices the victim lying in the street. The patrol closes, and attempts to render aid. The patrol has entered a predetermined kill zone, usually covered with automatic-weapons-fire and rocket-propelled grenades. The Iraqi will usually stay prone, or run just as the patrol approaches, and is considered expendable by the enemy.

The Counter: Be very suspicious if you come upon an indigenous person lying unattended in the streets. Anything on the street will draw a crowd, and an injured person will generally have a veritable health committee around him, arguing about what should be done. If there is someone lying in the street with no one around, that should say 'Ambush!' very loudly. Circle widely around. Do not dismount, take your weapon off "safe," and be ready for the feces to strike the ventilator. If you clear the area without incident, mark the grid coordinates and

round can silence the sniper. If available, tank rounds are excellent reminders not to mess with angry Americans.

Pop-Up and Shoot: There are lots of walls in Baghdad. Even though Saddam had the populace scared to death, still every house and major building is walled-off from the outside world. A favorite tactic of the opportunistic shooter is to wait until a patrol is in range, then pop-up, fire a burst, and disappear behind the wall. Sometimes he will escape through the alleys and crowded streets, but sometimes he will pop up again to fire or see if he hit anybody.

The Counter: If available, a .50 caliber will punch right through most of these walls. A grenade will also discourage the shooter, if not kill him. A significant problem with both of these solutions, however, is civilian casualties. Remember, we still have to convince the Iraqis that we are

the good guys, so don't go shooting through walls or tossing grenades behind them unless you are sure that the Bad Guys are actually there, and that the risk to the kids in the school on the other side is negligible.

MOUNTED SCENARIOS

The Drive-By: Guerrillas who see you as a target of opportunity use this. Perhaps they set out that morning, to find and kill, Americans, perhaps they are on the way back from Grandma's, but they see you and feel that it would be a good idea to light you up. The tactic is usually to tail your vehicle for a while and see if you are worth the risk. Once you become their target, they speed up, roll the windows down, stick the weapons out, and everybody empties a magazine into your Hummer as they go by. If they go by on the driver's side, they will usually try to save some ammo until they reach the driver. Then the whole truck has a bad day. A variation is to drive by you in the opposite direction and do the same thing. This gives them the advantage of going away from you, so that you have minimal opportunity to pursue them, or shoot at them, if you are able.

The Counter: Driving in Baghdad is not a spectator sport. Everybody in the vehicle needs to be alert at all times if you want to live. Not only be alert, look alert. If you are the medical team, look like Mad Max, with guns everywhere. This is not the time for weapons to be unloaded and pointed down, or for inattention. The guerrillas will pick targets that look easy, with occupants that aren't paying attention.

Weapons need to be pointed out of the vehicle, in the hands of alert and aggressive passengers; passengers in the rear who do not allow other vehicles to get too close; passengers who will fire on vehicles who show aggressive intent; passengers who are able to spot trouble before it gets too close.

If a vehicle approaches too closely, first stick out your hand. If they continue, point your weapon at the driver. This is universally understood. If the driver then continues, you must assume aggressive intent. A few rounds in the engine compartment will stop him. If he or his passengers display weapons, light them up.

The Sun Roof: The guerrillas have access to all manner of vehicles, including new SUVs with sunroofs. Spotting a convoy approaching them from the opposite direction, they will stop. The passenger will pop-up through the sunroof with an RPG, launch it at the convoy, duck back inside the vehicle, and then they will proceed in opposite direction of travel from you. This happens very quickly, and is difficult to see coming. They also like to perform this ambush with a thick median in between you and them, so that the vehicles that are not hit can't cross the median and chase them.

The Counter: The person riding shotgun in the front passenger's seat is the one who will see this ambush first. He yells something like "Pop-Up Ambush!" and opens fire on the SUV. The tip off is an SUV that is approaching you and stops for no apparent reason. When that sun roof opens and somebody comes out with a weapon, you must be prepared to shoot first.

The Cut-Out: A guerrilla vehicle passes you, seemingly innocent. He then maneuvers between you and the vehicle ahead of you, cutting you off from the convoy. He stops, forcing you to stop in traffic. The vehicles in your convoy proceed on their way. His comrades in another vehicle then stop, and the guerrillas from both of their vehicles bring you under fire.

The Counter: Never let another vehicle get between you and the vehicle ahead of you. When traveling through congested areas, keep about one coat of paint between your vehicle and the one ahead of you. If a civilian vehicle should attempt to cut you off or come between you, ram them, push them aside, and keep going. Be prepared to return fire. You can report it later, but don't stop for the ambush. If you are mistaken, there are Civic Action teams that will take a claim and request payment for the damages.

Far Ambush: Small-arms- or crew-served-fire from a distance to preclude accurate aimed-fire on you. Often from a bridge, overpass, building or rooftop.

Counter: Floor it. Get out of the kill zone as soon as possible. If one of your convoy is disabled, lay down suppressive fire on the



REUTERS/Suhail Salem



REUTERS/Aiko Daita

(top) A U.S. Army soldier points a heavy machine gun from atop a Humvee as a Black Hawk helicopter flies over the scene of an RPG-attack against U.S. troops in the center of Baghdad, 7 August 2003. (above) U.S. soldiers break down the gates of a house as others wait to storm the house during a raid in Tikrit, 16 September 2003.

enemy, call for help, pop red smoke (the helicopters will see you), and move in as soon as you can. Move everyone out of the kill zone and then render aid. You will have established rally points along the way. Use them.

Near Ambush: Accurate, aimed-fire from location(s) close to you. This may come from the side of the road, buildings next to the street, or wooded areas such as parks or vacant lots.

Counter: Return Fire immediately while getting out of the kill zone as soon as possible. Proceed to recover as indicated in Far Ambush. Depending on your tactical situation, you may assault the ambushers. While not advisable in each situation, this upsets their plan and makes them the hunted. Maximum firepower on the enemy is essential in this maneuver, and it should be practiced before it is attempted.

The Improvised Explosive Device, or IED: This is the weapon that is killing or wounding most of our soldiers in Iraq. There are plenty of unexploded munitions around from which the enemy can make weapons. There are also plenty of explosives. The IED could be an unexploded 120mm mortar

open around overpasses. When possible, drive in the middle lane. This will keep you away from the side of the road and the median, where bad things could be hiding. Stay on the hardball, and avoid recently filled potholes and mounds of dirt. If a souvenir looks too good to be true — it is. It's not worth your life.

The IED And Small Arms: This technique is certainly not unique to Iraq, but the guerrillas are using it more and more as time goes on. They will initiate an IED on a convoy or vehicle and wait for it to stop. They will have the site covered with small-arms-fire, and open up on the crippled vehicle to assure their kill. They will also engage the remaining vehicles in the convoy, to inflict more casualties, and to block any timely rescue attempt to the crippled vehicle.

Counter: The same response as to a near or far ambush is the response here, depending on the proximity. Bringing maximum firepower on the enemy and calling in support are the keys to prevailing in this situation.

RULES TO LIVE BY:

As can be seen above, there are some potentially nasty situations which await the combat soldier in Iraq. And every soldier, be he a 91B grunt or O-6 in a palace on the Tigris, is a combat soldier in Iraq. Some basic principles to keep you alive:

- Travel armed, and live, with your weapon. Keep it clean and functional. Whenever possible, practice with it. Obtain hand grenades and handle them carefully.
- Be sure that you have your basic load of ammo, and then add some more magazines.
- If you have been issued an M-9 pistol, good. Just don't consider it your primary weapon. Do what you need to do to get a rifle or submachine gun.
- When you travel, your vehicle should have at least a SAW, and one of the vehicles should have a SINGARS with preset frequencies for MEDEVAC and support.
- Your Combat Lifesaver Bag is like your American Express: Don't leave home without it. Be sure it's stocked.
- Do a map recon before you depart on your mission. Make sure everybody knows the route and rally points.
- Consult your translators about the route you plan to take and the area you will visit. They live in the city, and may have information not available through your S-2. If you trust them enough, consider arming them. More firepower in your vehicle is a good thing.
- Make sure everyone knows your SOP for actions on-contact. Be strict about holding a briefing before you move out, and practice your SOP.
- Stay alert and be suspicious. Many of the things that the Bad Guys do, they do in plain sight because we aren't paying attention. After the combat phase in Baghdad, many Iraqi generals and others on the wanted list were riding around in their Mercedes, passing U.S. troops in Hummers. If something looks wrong, it is. Avoid it, get out of the area, or shoot it if you have to.
- Do not stop for vehicles that pull in front of you and stop, or slow down and stop, for no apparent reason. Ram them, floor it, and get out of the area. Report it later.
- Stay hydrated and as fit as you can. The more fit and hydrated you are, the better your chances of survival. ☒



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Justin Harris

A member of the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) stands guard over suspects in a raid while looking for Rakan Najim Abdullah who was captured on a raid in the early morning of 26 October 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom in Mosul, Iraq.

round with an electric detonator. It could be a soda can with TNT and nails. They can and do come in all varieties. They are hidden in the plastic bags that one sees everywhere, that litter the roads and neighborhoods in most developing countries. They are suspended from overpasses, placed under road kill, under piles of trash, and loose dirt on the roads. They are detonated with electric devices on command, or by pressure devices when run over. There may be a series of them, so that when one vehicle is disabled and another comes to its rescue, the second is also taken out. They may also be attached to things that would be nice to have as souvenirs: flags, weapons, or uniforms.

Counter: Another reason to be alert. Avoid driving over, or near, anything that doesn't belong in the road. Don't run over the plastic bag or MRE box in your way, and keep your eyes

CHARIOTS OF FIREPOWER

PART 2

INTO THE LONGEST AMBUSH IN HISTORY

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
STAFF SERGEANT (P) DILLARD J. JOHNSON

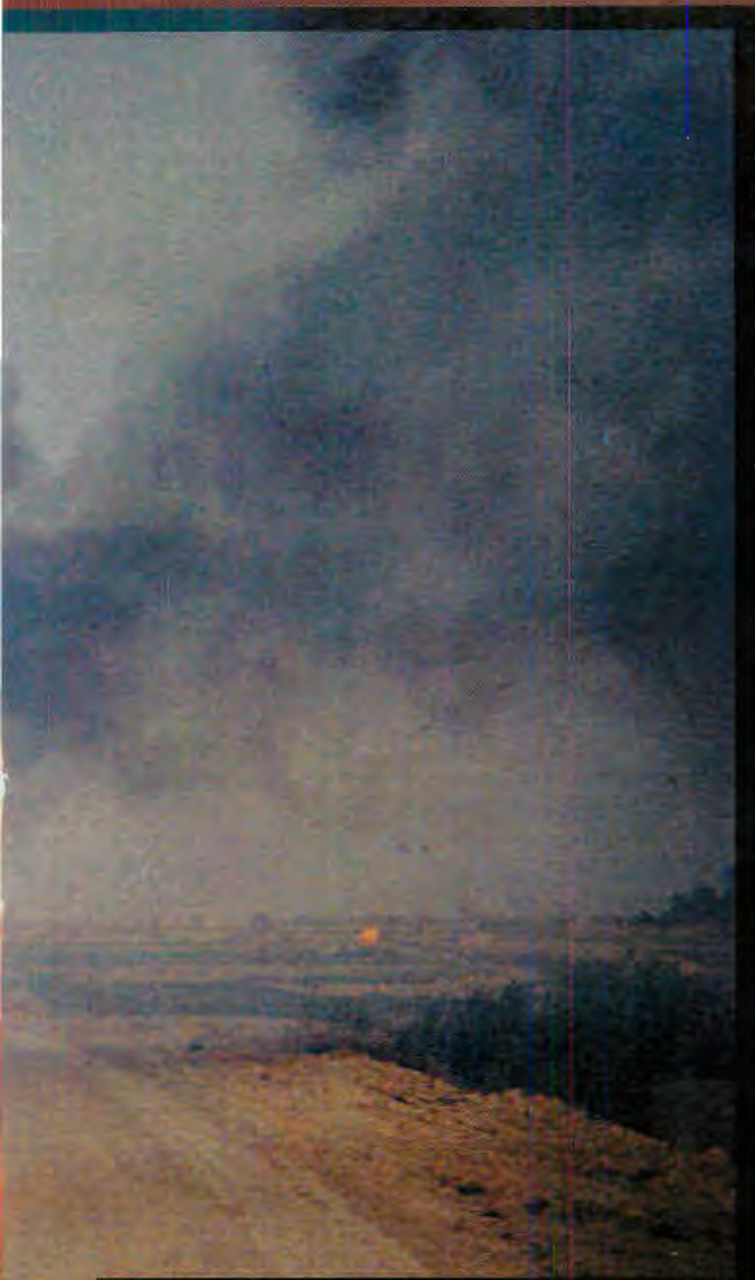


Last month we covered Crazy Horse Troop's drive from the Kuwait border into fierce resistance from overwhelming numbers of Iraqi forces near the town of As Samawah. Superior skill and will prevailed, but Staff Sergeant Dillard J. Johnson's Bradley became separated from the rest of the troop and was thoroughly shot up during a smothering mortar barrage.

IT had only been two hours since we made contact with the Iraqi Army garrison in As Samawah, and although we had won a series of hard fire-fights hands down, I was now in deep shit and had to do the right thing, and fast. Overhead

mortar bursts had wounded Specialist Sullivan and me: A round from an RPG had knocked-out our radio. We were cut off from our unit. We were low on ammo, and both our M240Bs were damaged and would not fire. We were in the middle of a continuous mortar bombardment and Iraqi troops were boiling out of the military compound and we were taking fire from small arms, heavy weapons and RPGs.

The Iraqis firing the mortars from the woods didn't know for sure where my Bradley was, so they were dropping rounds everywhere, creating a continual shower of dirt as fields, roads, vehicles and buildings were blown sky-



ward. I started my crew drills: Everyone knew what they had to do. I started checking out Sully to see how bad he was wounded, and told my driver Spc. Sperry to get in the back of the Bradley and start loading HE into the ready boxes. I had my gunner Sergeant Soprano looking for the mortar positions.

Sully would be OK: Both hands had been cut up and his Camelbak was full of holes from the mortar fragments, but the tough cover and interior membrane of his Camelbak had helped save his life. I was bleeding from small spots everywhere from the mortar fragments and I could not hear in my right ear, but I was alive and I thought I would be OK [Staff Sgt. Johnson would later have to be Medivaced to Walter Reed for multiple surgeries to treat his injuries].

Crazy Horse troop had put a king size ass-kicking on the enemy, but we were cut off and the Iraqis were giving us their best shot. I had to get my radios working. Thank God I had my Gerber multi-tool — it would be put to the test that day. Soprano was listening to the net as I worked on the antenna mount that was hit a glancing blow from an RPG. Soprano yelled “I got it” and I heard Sergeant First Class Talmadge Lee Bennett’s voice over the radio net. I can’t tell you how happy I was to hear that: Bennett was our mortar platoon leader. He was from Jacksonville, Florida, and had been in the Ranger Battalion for a number of years. He was the man you want on the other end of

Third of the Seventh Cav's approach to asymmetrical war: Attack a superior force of heavy armor with Bradley fighting vehicles and a 25mm gun, and kill them. This T-72 tank burns brightly thanks to Sergeant Michael Soprano's unerring aim. (inset) The Carnivore takes out another T-72. The range at which the Bradley's silver bullets will take out a T-72 is classified — but suffice it to say, if a good gunner can see it, the T-72 is toast.



the radio when you need indirect fire and you needed it to bracket the target quick. I told Bennett what I had and told him where they were. Sergeant Justin Litiko's crew fired the first mortar for the U.S. Army and it hit right on top of their heavy-weapons position. I had Bennett's mortars shift position and fire up the mortar pits that had been firing at me. After more than 20 rounds of 120mm the Iraqis were dead, dying or running like hell and their tubes fell silent. Now I had time to get back to work on my equipment.

Soprano's M4 was broken in half and only his SureFire light was salvageable. Mortar-shell fragments had cut through the synthetic outside and through the aluminum, but it still worked. My NVGs and laser range-finder had holes in them from the mortar rounds. My radio was going in and out, so I only got part of what was going on around us.

Every Mortar In As Samawah

After the Iraqi Army had stopped firing, the troop commander ordered Staff Sgt. Geary's section to secure the far side of the bridge. I was in a good over-watch position and watched it all unfold in front of me. Geary was in the lead and had made it almost to the far side of the bridge when all hell broke loose. The wood-line in front of me opened up with small-arms fire, RPGs and mortars — all of them headed right at Geary. The mortar rounds hit the road in front and beside Geary's Bradley, blowing large holes in the road. Geary's Bradley hit a mortar shell hole with such force it knocked the track off both sides of his Bradley and he was stuck. The Bradley behind him turned and moved for cover. Forest Geary is a fifth-generation soldier from Odessa, Missouri. A man of action, he is quite possibly one of the best Scouts in the U.S. Army.

Still only being able to talk to the mortar platoon, I called for indirect-fire again. Litiko, a section sergeant from Akron, Ohio, pushed his men to be their best and was on the fast track. Litiko's gun crew was on the money again, raining death on the Iraqi mortar position. It had been 15 minutes since I saw

(right) The second day at As Samawah, Soprano posed with Johnson's temporary-trophy AK, which Johnson soon had to turn against its former owners, when his loader's M4 was blasted in two by mortar fire. (below) Although most armor encountered was more contemporary, the occasional T-62 came out to play, like this one shot up by Staff Sergeant Johnson. All takers were destroyed.



Geary's Bradley stop, and I still did not know what had happened to him. At the angle he was stuck, he could not fire his main gun at the enemy. He was outside his hatch, firing his gunner's M4 for all it was worth into the Iraqis. I watched another mortar attack on his position, with the rounds almost falling on top of his Bradley. By this time the Iraqis were only 300 meters from his Bradley. I knew at that point that he was in trouble. I kept looking for someone to come and help him, finally telling my crew, "Fuck it — let's go get them!" We moved out and started taking small-arms fire right off the bat. Soprano let a long burst of 25mm go into the woodline as we moved to Geary's Bradley. Sully was firing in front of Geary's Bradley, at the dismounts that were now running for cover.

Recovery Under Fire

I stopped my Bradley in between Geary's Brad and the enemy fire that was becoming more intense. I dropped the ramp for Geary's crew to get in the back of my Bradley. Then the wood-line and fighting position that had been firing at us started getting hit with indirect-fire. Across the net, I could hear Sgt. 1st Class Jason Christner adjusting fire. He was a true professional, and had been wounded in Somalia. If there was one man who was a combat-multiplier it would be him.

The mortars were on the mark again — Christner had bought us some time. Just as we were going to leave, Staff Sgt. McConologue showed up in his M1 along with Staff Sgt. Crawford in his Bradley. Geary and I checked out his Bradley and knew it would be hard to recover, but we were going to try. I had McConologue put his Tank on the road to pull Geary's Bradley. We would push with the other two Bradleys. We tried pulling and pushing, but the Bradley was not moving and we started taking more fire. The gunner for the M1, Sgt. Housesy, was firing at the Iraqis and keeping them at bay while we worked on getting out Geary's Bradley. I watched as the Iraqi soldiers showed up in everything — cars, trucks and even an ambulance. The fire got to be so heavy on us we had to move away from the stuck Bradley and set up in an over-watch position. The M1 moved back across the bridge to get fuel. Geary's crew was in the back of my Brad now.

Then, our OH58Ds (scout helicopters) showed up out of nowhere, and helped ID the enemy position so the mortars could put more fire on them. We watched the Iraqis for another hour as the mortars and both air troops (Demon and Eagle) made gun runs and adjusted fire on the enemy position. Then the commander told us to pull back to where the rest of the unit was, on the south side of the canal — the CO had called in an airstrike.

What Airstrike?

We started moving back across the river, and as we moved the Iraqi mortars started falling on us again, but our luck was holding out — the mortar rounds fell short

of us. At last we had made it back to the U.S. side of the canal. Now we had time to see the medics, get fuel and ammo and I was finally able to get my radios working. Geary and his crew were still with me in my Bradley and helped in the up-loading of my weapons. Captain Jeff McCoy, our CO, came over to see how we were doing. I then went over to the mortars to thank them for their help. That is when I found out how hard the Iraqis had fought back. Not only did I get hit by the mortars, but the rest of the troop had mortars falling on them as well. My First Sergeant, Roy D. Griggs, and the second platoon leader 2nd Lt. Charles Tucker, a 23-year-old West Point grad from Haleyville, Alabama, had both been wounded by the mortars. First Sergeant Griggs had been up with the commander at the objective when the mortars started landing. One mortar round landed so close it almost turned his armor personnel carrier (APC) over. Griggs was from Ocala, Florida, and was well-respected by everyone in the squadron for his leadership and knowledge. He was the best First Sergeant that I had the honor to work with.

Captain McCoy and Sgt. 1st Class Broadhead took over watching Geary's Bradley while we waited for the airstrike that never came. Just before dark, the troop moved back over the bridge and set up a perimeter. It was a long night, with us taking mortar- and small-arms fire all night. We took turns shooting the main gun. It would be a long night — we needed sleep. The Iraqis probed us all night. It had been more than five days and we could not keep our eyes open any longer. Geary worked all night getting his Bradley back up. The next day he spotted a dismounted team that had made it within 200 meters of my Bradley. Geary directed his gunner to fire at the dismounts and then ran across an open field under fire to warn the rest of the platoon of the danger. Geary's gunner, Corporal Dakel, had taken out the dismounts with his coax. There was a lot of movement in As Samawah by the Iraqis, but not that many of them had the balls to take us on. By midday they were moving back into the second compound. This time we would break their back.

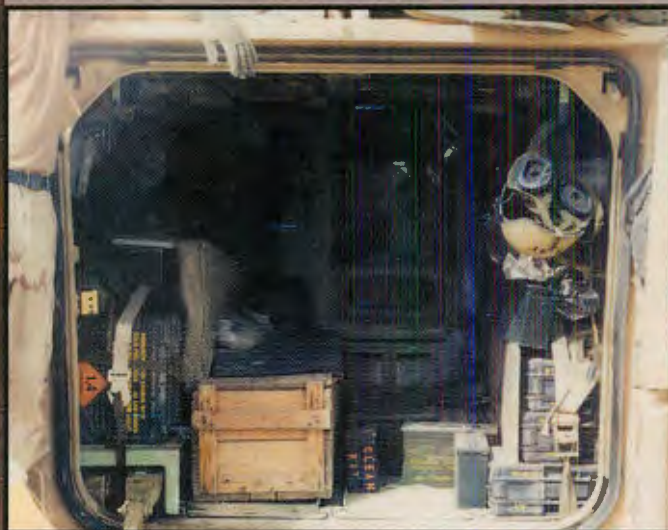
Compound Fracture

We moved into the first compound with four M1s and six Bradleys. Broadhead was in front and I was right on his back. We saw the bad guys taking weapons out of the compound. We charged into them with 120mm HE, 25mm HE, .50 cal and 7.62mm, lighting up the compound like it was the Fourth of July. I took fire from the guardhouse and then ran over the top of it. There was a blast on the side of my Bradley — an RPG round had hit a wooden box I had put there to keep my coffee, sugar, coffee pot and small stove. It had saved my life. *My coffee pot! Now I was pissed.* Sergeant Soprano cut the Iraqi in half with HE and then started firing-up one of the buildings that had about 15 guys in it: 20 rounds later there was no building. We had two Iraqis on the ground bleeding bad, and called for the medics to get them. Griggs and Corporal Brown came down to get the two Iraqis out. This was not much of a fight; The Iraqis were firing AKs at us as they were running away.

Now was the time our training would pay off: Broadhead and I were working these guys into a corner. The hunter-killer team worked just like we had trained at Ft. Stewart. I maneuvered on the Iraqis and forced them in front of Broadhead's M1. Sergeant Robert Hull, the



A couple days into the battle, Staff Sgt. Johnson and the Carnivore again on the prowl, looking for more Iraqis who wanted to dance. They didn't have to wait long or travel far to find them. (below) If you're used to seeing a Bradley in its infantry-fighting-vehicle configuration, this may seem a little cramped: The Cav stuffs 'em with ammo, ammo and more ammo — then goes out and kills tanks twice their weight.



tank's gunner, then took care of them with a .50 cal. and 7.62mm. Hull had to be the deadliest man in Iraq that day.

Mano A Mano

Broadhead had dismounted his tank and was inspecting one of the Iraqi arms rooms when an enemy soldier walked in on him. Just like the Old West, it was a quick-draw — Broadhead with his pistol and the Iraqi with his AK-47. Broadhead emptied his M9 pistol into him. The Iraqi officer only got one round off, and it hit the floor.

The whole compound was on fire now. We had come down to the compound and were attacking the Iraqis in their backyard. We handed them their ass. Now that we had killed everyone in the compound who did not surrender, it was time to make sure they were not going to use it or its materiel again. We moved all six Bradleys and the four tanks on line and opened fire on the compound. When the ammo and fuel went up, it was a huge explosion.

The CO called us on the radio and told us that A troop was there to replace us and to do a rear passage of lines. It was a great feeling knowing that with almost no sleep and

more than 26 hours of fighting, we were all still alive. Crazy Horse troop had passed the test.

At 1845 hours, on 25 March, we were in a hind position waiting on orders for our change of mission. We would only get to rest for that night. After the big fight we had in As Samawah, the squadron commander, Lieutenant Colonel Terry Farrell, was going to put A troop in the lead and let us rest a little longer and escort the field trains (support vehicles) up to the town of Nafen. We were told that contact with the enemy was not likely. Right. It should be an easy move. Right.

Hey, Diddle, Diddle: Right Up The Middle

We moved out just as dark fell. I was in the lead and Broadhead was behind me. Less than an hour later, in his thermals Soprano saw a pick-up truck on a side road. It had a 14.7mm gun in the back of it. I told him to light it up and then all hell broke loose. Just as Soprano fired at the truck, I heard Broadhead call "Contact dismounts east" over the radio net. This was bad: The truck Soprano shot was on the west side of the road.

We were moving like ducks in a row and we had enemy on both sides of the road, but this was not the worst of it: We had more than 100 wheeled-support vehicles with us, on a road with deep ditches on both sides, and had just entered what would be the longest ambush in history.

The Iraqi soldiers had dug their foxholes right next to the road, so I had my driver run over the ones on the right and Sully shoot the ones on the left. Soprano was killing the Iraqis that were farther out firing RPGs at us. Looking back behind me, all I could see were white lines from the fire-fights that were going on. We emptied our HE ready box and I was reloading my coax box for the second time, and Sully was out of ammo in the back. But we had to push through — we were in the kill

Johnson's Day-or-Nite You-Call, We-Haul Destruction Service fired up this truck and bus-load of Iraqi troops near Objective Floyd. Although Iraqi infantry and armor fought together, they were very poor when it came to mutual support. (below) Soprano and his first target serviced with a turncoat AK.

zone. Mortars were falling on us now. The Iraqis were hitting the field trains hard.

Staff Sergeants John Williams and Heath Thayer, Scouts from 3rd platoon, were doing all they could. They would stop and fire up the enemy and let the fuel trucks pass through them and then race up ahead of them and do it again. Mortars were hitting the road when the medical platoon passed through it. One of the medic trucks was hit, on fire, and was taking small-arms fire. The medic platoon's First Lieutenant, Sammy Gram, stopped his truck in the middle of the firefight and engaged the enemy until his soldiers were in another vehicle moving away. Gram was prior-enlisted in the Rangers with Sgt. 1st Class Bennett before he went to Clemson University. That night his Ranger training paid off as he saved the lives of many men.

The Longest Ambush In History

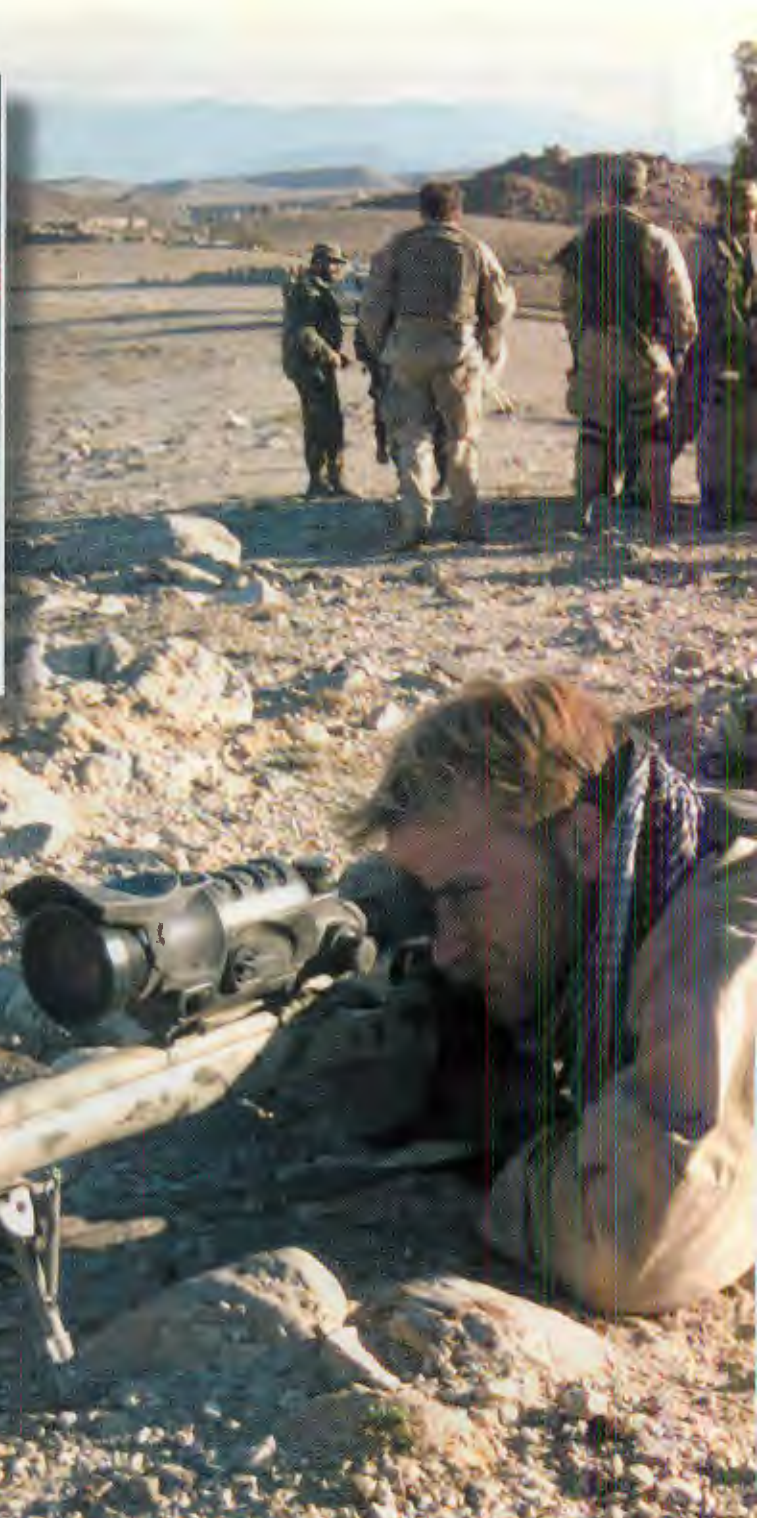
He fought until Thayer moved up to his position and took out the Iraqis with his 25mm. Everyone called this "Ambush Alley" but it was really the Night of Heroes — where many men stopped and helped their fellow soldiers fight their way out. Broadhead's .50-cal. barrel was white-hot. There was no way to miss the Iraqis — they were everywhere. I was firing the AK47 I picked up to replace my gunner's M4. Sully was firing his M203 into the enemy.

Up ahead I saw the back of a Bradley. We had caught up with the forward unit and I had to stop. My Bradley was out of ammo. We had to up-load everything. Sully was get-



ting the ammo ready when I saw eight mortar tubes and more than 100 dismounts to my left in the woodline. All I could do was send up a contact report and watch as they fired at me. The first round knocked me down into the turret. Mortar rounds were hitting almost on top of me now. Broadhead called over the radio and told me to stay down inside the turret — the Iraqis were almost on top of me.

Next month, the intrepid crew of the Carnivore button-up and Staff Sergeant Broadhead hoses swarms of dismounts off their Bradley with his .50. Then, Crazy Horse Troop fights its way through the longest ambush in history, inflicting incredibly disproportional destruction on enemy forces — but at a price. ❧



STRIKING AT THE

HEROIN



TEXT & PHOTOS BY
PAUL AVALLONE

U.N. Aide Says Afghan Drug Trade Pays for Terrorist Attacks

By Carlotta Gall

(Quoted from *The New York Times INTERNATIONAL*,
Friday, 5 September 2003.):

KABUL, Afghanistan, August 30 — The American-led forces in Afghanistan must address the country's drug trade because the huge opium and heroin crops are being used by militants to finance their activities, the top United Nations drug official has warned.

Antonio Maria Costa, executive director of the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, said in an interview here that there were indications that those carrying out violence in Afghanistan were financing their attacks with drug trafficking, and in some places forcing farmers to grow opium poppies.

"The terrorists and traffickers are the same people," he said at the end of a weeklong visit to Afghanistan. "You cannot fight the war against terror without going against drug trafficking."

Mr. Costa said that he had asked the American-led forces here several times to focus on the drug trade, and that he had seen reports that military forces had recently intercepted drug traffickers and had destroyed at least one illegal heroin laboratory.

John on his M-24 sniper rifle, with AN/PVS-10 Day/Night sniper scope, with Frank sighting with Steiner M22 range-finder binos, keep an overwatch on the main avenue of approach while the ODA and its MRF complete mop-up of the two active drugs labs during a three-compound-simultaneous hit in the heroin capital of Afghanistan, the Shin War Valley. (inset) This poppy bud, torn open, reveals the sticky white resin coming from the stem. It is this resin from which opium and heroin is processed.

TRADE

WITH SF IN AFGHANISTAN PART 1

Afghanistan was the world's largest source of illicit opium in 2002, producing 3,750 tons, according to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. This year's harvest will be much the same, Mr. Costa Said. ... ”

Two months after 9-11, B Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group of the Alabama National Guard, was called up to active duty. The company spent the next eight months at Fort Bragg, NC, attached to 7th Special Forces Group, executing joint-training missions in Central and South America. In late August 2002, the company as well as the then-also-activated 20th Group Headquarters and the remainder of the 1st Battalion were deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom. The five Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs) of B Company were each assigned a strategic location in eastern Afghanistan.

It is no secret that ODA 2025, on which the author was a communications sergeant, operated in Nangarhar Province, working out of the only city there, Jalalabad. With approximately 150,000 people, Jalalabad is the country's third largest city, after Kabul and Kandahar. Calling it a city might be a stretch. With electricity an on-and-off luxury, piped running water almost nonexistent, paved streets measured by the meter not the mile, no official police force, no fire department, no banks, no phone system, no newspaper and no mail, it is more an overgrown village. Fundamentalist Muslim to its core, Nangarhar/Jalalabad was a pre-war Taliban stronghold, as well as the home of Osama bin Laden.

The province borders Pakistan on the east and the south in a set of mountain ranges. The eastern gate to Pakistan is through the Khyber Pass, and the southern gate is a myriad of footpaths through the Tora Bora Mountains. Except for the city of Jalalabad itself, which is set in a fertile valley through which the Kabul River flows, Nangarhar Province is a harsh terrain of dirt, rock, terraced poppy fields and snow-covered mountains. The majority of the people there live in a scattering of rural villages that are, but for the internal combustion engine, still lost in the 16th Century.

For seven months, from mid-September 2002 to mid-April 2003, ODA 2025 performed its mission, which was to deny the province to the Taliban and al-Qaeda and to destroy any of their personnel or arms uncovered. The following is the author's first-hand account of the ODA's operations against the Taliban-run opium/heroin trade in its Area of Operation (AO).

We'd been on the road for a good deal more than two hours, starting the day early, up at around 0300 hours and rounding up four squads of our Mobile Reaction Force (MRF, pronounced "murf") a short while later at their compound. Speaking through one of our terps (interpreters), Team Leader Captain Jim and Team Sergeant Terry laid out the operational plan for the MRF squad leaders, who would pass it down to their guys. Then, sometime after 0400, we moved out in our little parade of Toyota pickups

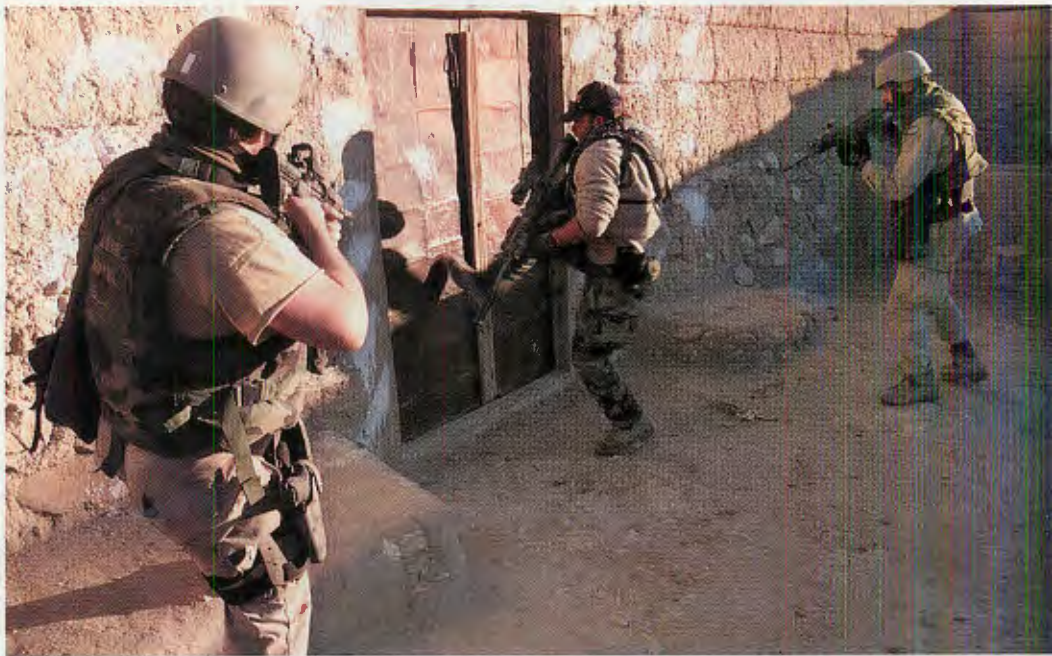
— us in our Tacomas, our MRF in their HiLuxs.

Two-plus hours later, and the night was gone and full sunrise was maybe no more than 10 minutes away. Word came back on the inner-team channel of our MBTR (pronounced "embitter") radios that we were "five minutes out."

All right, finally. We should have hit the target already, maybe 15 minutes ago, in the gray light between night and day, when people are definitely still sleeping and surprise is more assured. But we'd lost time when we'd taken a wrong turn somewhere, driving in the dark without headlights, and had to correct by retreating and then crossing some expanses of terraced fields, just four-wheeling over short stone walls and irrigation ditches.

A MRF truck was in the lead, with squad leader Bubba Jon and some of his guys. It was hard enough keeping track in the daylight of the back roads (a better descriptive name might be rutted paths) that spider-web rural eastern Afghanistan, never mind trying to do it in the dark without headlights.

We were in the foothills of the Spin Ghar mountains in the Shin War valley, the place from where 60 percent of the European heroin comes. That's worth repeating — from this valley alone comes 60% of the European supply of heroin. Think Shin War, think opium poppies. Yet, at that barren time of year, mid-November, the one word that best visually describes the valley is the color of dirt — tan. Tan everything.



Starting with the earth itself, to the dirt walls of the huge compounds in which the extended families live to the terraced poppy fields that were then barren.

Heading Into Heroin County

We'd passed through numerous villages in the dark and might have been heard, then seen, by someone connected to the drug business. If the guy had a cell phone, he could have called ahead a general warning that the Americans were heading into heroin country. It was something not to think about, being something completely out of our control.

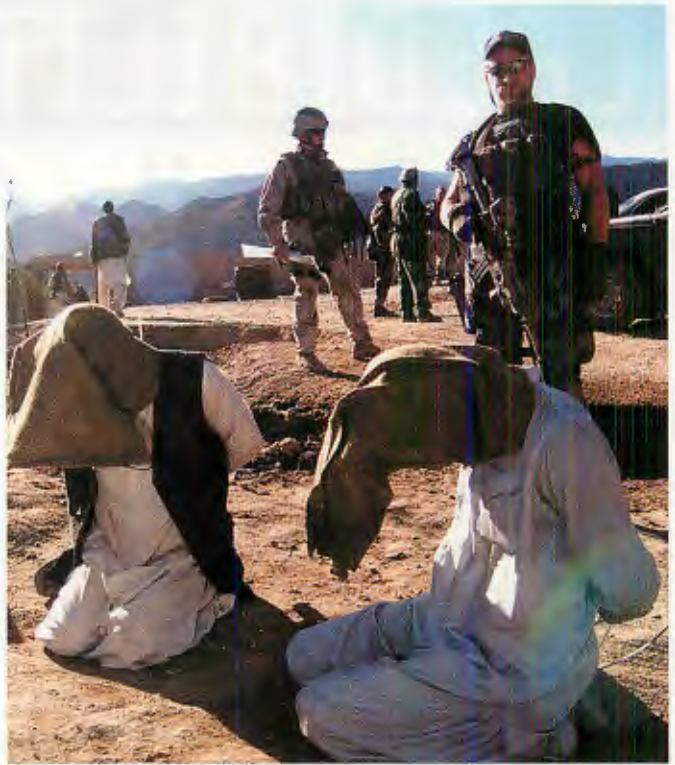
The first half-hour of the trip had been fast, speeding down Highway 1. To call it a highway is to be more than generous, as it's barely two lanes of thin broken asphalt, pockmarked with potholes the size of four-drawer filing cabinets that, hitting at 60 miles per hour, challenges one not to check

the rearview mirror for the axle and wheel you'd swear you'd just left in your wake.

Highway 1 is the road from Kabul by way of Jalalabad to Pakistan, crossing at the Khyber Pass. The only extensive, unbroken stretch of asphalt is from Jalalabad to Pakistan. At night we could do 60 down this stretch because truckers didn't use the road much after dark, fearing the roadside bandits who would extort money or steal the loads.

Bandits were not a threat to us; we traveled too heavy, in both manpower and weapons. With 95 percent of our movement by vehicle, on Highway 1 or dirt roads, the danger to us was IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices), which were homemade landmines detonated by remote control. The risk was greatly lessened by our O-dark-thirty departure and by keeping our intentions secret, even from our MRF, until the last-minute premovement briefing.

It's a somewhat strange thing, us being 95 percent mobile in pickup trucks; throughout my 25 years in SF, I had never imagined that we'd be riding into combat in any vehicle, let alone 4-wheel-drive four-door Toyota Tacomas. From the first days of SF's famous Phase Training Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the emphasis then — and still today — has been on humping rucksacks in the woods and living out of those rucks. No more, not in Afghanistan. We and our MRF patrolled Ranger-file mobile in our Toyota pick-



(far left) Clearing a drug-processing lab in rural Afghanistan, Jason (left) and Laval (right) cover John kicking in the door of an interior building. (above) John stands guard over the segregated and bagged detainees who are awaiting their fate during the mop-up of the two opium/heroin processing labs ODA 2025 raided in rural Afghanistan. (left) The team establishes a temporary base while on patrol in the foothills overlooking the semi-fertile terrain in eastern Afghanistan. These are some of the Toyota pickup trucks used by the ODA. The two pickups in the rear are the MRF's HiLuxs, with the Tactical Psyops Team's Surf with the broadcast speakers on the roof. In the foreground, note the variety of antennae on the roof of the silver Tacoma. The satellite antenna on the side enabled real-time communication around the world at any time while in movement.

ups. Sure, that mode of travel presents a high and overt profile, but in a land that is basically a huge expanse of semi-arid desert, foot movement would be ludicrous.

The few times we ran foot patrols in the mountains, we'd drive the pickups as far as we could, until the rutted roads became narrow foot paths, then humped the rest of the way. Those foot patrol efforts proved futile in finding and fighting the enemy because in the barren mountain terrain concealment was non-existent and a lookout could spot a patrol a mile away, leaving ample time for the enemy to disperse and "unass the AO", as the saying goes. Whatever elements of the Taliban and al-Qaeda that were still in Afghanistan during the time of our deployment had long ago learned not to confront the Americans head-on.

In fact, by the time we made it to Afghanistan in September 2002, the major fighting of the war had been over

for months and our mission was to find and root-out whatever remained of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. A corollary of that was to establish a secure environment in which the Civil Affairs teams attached to us could perform their separate mission, which was to start the rebuilding of the country.

Reliance On Low-Level Source Intel

Other than the Special Forces mission to stand up and train the new Afghan Defense Forces in Kabul, like it or not and as much as our command denied it, we knew that the SF role in the outback of Afghanistan was getting closer and closer to morphing into a police action. That said, our success counted on us creating an efficient unconventional-warfare setting in which we established, equipped, trained and

Continued on page 74

CREDIBILITY IN IRAQ:

A Fragile Commodity

BY DON NORTH

In the chill January days when Pentagon officials were mapping the route for a new Iraq, a paper was circulated here in Washington proposing a free, impartial and independent Iraqi Media Network (IMN). The paper stated "Whilst democracy requires a free press, at the same time it requires one that is accountable to the society, and the individuals within it, which it serves."

It was a good plan. It would model IMN as a public broadcast network similar to PBS or the BBC, two of the most respected broadcasters in the world. So I joined a small group of American and Iraqi expatriate journalists who signed-on to bring honest and professional radio and TV to Iraq after the fall of Baghdad. The Iraq Media Network went on the air with radio on 10 April and television on 13 May. It was greeted with great anticipation by Iraqis who expected that after 35 years of Saddam Hussein's self-serving propaganda, a new free and democratic media would be created that would make the new governing elements transparent and accountable and generate credible debate on the reconstruction of Iraq.

Iraqis were already grumbling that they were not safe in the streets; that it took three hours in line to buy a tank of gas and electricity had not been effectively restored. Even so, there were high hopes that American know-how would at least bring what Americans do best: produce innovative, interesting television entertainment and reasonably honest news.

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Now six months later, like so many of the goals and hopes for the new Iraq, a credible media has not been realized. Especially during Ramadan, when Iraqis gather with their friends and family after a day of fasting, the failure to establish television "accountable to the society" is strongly felt. Instead, IMN has become an irrelevant mouthpiece for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) propaganda, managed news and mediocre foreign programs.

I have trained journalists after the fall of other tyrannies in Bosnia, Romania and Afghanistan. I don't blame the Iraqi journalists for the failure of IMN. They daily ignore serious threats branding them as "American collaborators" and work for insufficient salaries.

Although unschooled in the basic principles of democratic journalism, once they realized it was okay to responsibly confront authority they caught on fast. It was in this region that the first written words were recorded 5,000 years ago and where the first laws, the Hammurabi Code were enacted. This highly literate society hungers for intelligent communication

and a responsible media. There is a saying in the Middle East that *Cairo writes, Beirut publishes and Baghdad reads.*

There are few peoples in the world who take greater pride in free speech and the pursuit of truth in media than Americans. It is enshrined in our Constitution. Thomas Jefferson, in 1787, wrote: "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

Since the fall of Baghdad, over 207 new publications have sprung up along with IMN and a handful of radio stations. Today's Iraq is certainly the realm of newspapers without government that Jefferson contemplated, although I doubt President Jefferson would be pleased.

It was a complicated media world I joined in Iraq. Most publications were (and still are) sponsored by political or religious interest groups with rigid agendas. Some Iraqi editors even embraced the advice of a *Chicago Tribune* editor during the Civil War; "If no news send rumors." There were some 5,000 employees of the old Ministry of Information sent packing after the war. Many were trained propagandists and fabricators for Saddam. They simply went home and continued writing lies and disinformation.

"Selective Democracy"

Obviously, journalism training was urgently needed. A brutal form of training was delivered by the U.S. Army and CPA officials when they found stories offensive. They called on the offices of offending newspapers and often left them padlocked and in ruins. No mediation, no appeal. If the *Washington Post* reported

terrorist threats or bin Laden statements in Baghdad today, it would probably be closed down. Some training in basic journalism and fact-checking seems to have been beyond the budget of CPA who demand that responsible journalism spring complete from the ashes of Saddam's decades of tyranny.

My Iraq journalist friends tell me that CPA's "Code of Conduct" banning "intemperate speech that could incite violence" is "selective democracy," similar in spirit if not in effect to the censorship of Saddam Hussein. Iraqi journalists also tell me they suspect it was at the urging of CPA that the Iraqi Governing Council banned *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabia* satellite news from their news conferences last month for two weeks, which only served to further diminish credibility for the Council, already regarded with suspicion by many Iraqis.



courtesy author

IMN journalist trainer Josh O'Conner gathers video tapes from the ruins of Uday Hussein's mansion in Baghdad. Over 4,000 VHS Hollywood and European films from Uday's collection were claimed by IMN and are now broadcast against copyright regulations to fill required airtime in the absence of available legal programs.

What should be America's greatest export to the world, our Bill of Rights and the First Amendment, could have been effectively transplanted here and encouraged to grow as one of the foundations of a just society. It didn't happen.

The original plan for IMN appears to have been jettisoned by officials at CPA who were more interested in managing news for both Iraqis and Americans. The United States has a responsibility to effectively explain its positions and policies to Iraqis, to Americans and to the world, but not at the price of making IMN into another Voice Of America. Through a combination of incompetence and indifference CPA has destroyed the fragile credibility of IMN. Once diminished, credibility is hard to restore. The reasons are many:

- A revolving door of officials with no credible television or journalism experience dictated plans and policy to IMN.

- A surprising lack of operating capital, in spite of being the most expensive U.S. government media project in history at an estimated 4 million dollars a month, forced IMN to run on a shoestring, and look like it. There were no funds for basic equipment like camera batteries, tripods or editing equipment. A \$500 request for a satellite dish to downlink the Reuters news feed was refused. A \$200 request for printing a training manual in Arabic for reporters was turned down.

- Lack of planning for program production or acquisition resulted in illegal airing of copyright European and Hollywood film tapes confiscated from the mansion of Saddam's son, Uday.

- IMN staff were ordered to cover endless daily CPA news conferences, interviews and photo opportunities leaving little time and few facilities to cover genuine news stories initiated by IMN reporters on the street.

- The right of "collective bargaining," another much admired American tradition was trashed by CPA management when IMN staff twice went on strike for higher wages. IMN staff were "told in effect "our way, or the highway." CPA based staff salaries on the old Ministry of Information pay scale which paid a reporter the equivalent of U.S. \$120 a month. Some staff have already quit to join other agencies paying market rates. When new TV and radio stations are established in the coming months, the most experienced IMN staff will likely leave en masse.

- The first News Director, Ahmad Al Rikaby, a sort of Arabic Tom Brokaw, was a respected and credible Iraqi expatriate journalist, well known as the voice of Radio Free Iraq. Al Rikaby had resisted CPA dictates demanding managed news. When he fired staff troublemakers or Ba'athists, CPA rehired them and insisted only they could hire or fire IMN staff. Al Rikaby's authority was so compromised he resigned.

- IMN was envisioned to help Iraqis talk to each other. It was to be a national media voice that would give them a sense of nationhood and identity. It was to be a chance for communicating between the regions, political factions and religions of Iraq. It was to be an answering voice to those who would keep enmity alive by exploiting the differences and continuing to fragment the society Saddam built. It was to have established credible news and public affairs programs in regional stations that could be rebroadcast on the network, allowing Kurd, Shia and Sunni to hear each others point of view. This would have at least helped bandage old wounds. It would have encouraged discussion and debate for the direction of a new Iraq. Although CPA improved transmitter and broadcast facilities throughout Iraq, it failed miserably to persuade staff in many regional stations to cooperate with

IMN. The 101st Airborne using contingency funds has largely sponsored the broadcast station in Mosul which has resisted being folded into the IMN family and accept the base salaries being paid in Baghdad.

- Incredibly, the vital training of IMN reporters was turned over to the Dubai satellite station, *Al Arabia*, that often produces slanted, biased and anti-American news.

- Instead of creating and encouraging local TV productions, CPA bought old programs from Middle East Broadcasting (MBC) and Lebanese Broadcasting (LBC).

- CPA didn't allow its journalists to edit, analyze, or otherwise "filter," its news conferences, interviews and photo ops. Public diplomacy is one thing, but CPA has ignored our own democratic ideals in its role as the overseer of IMN. Destroying the credibility of IMN has left CPA without an effective communications conduit to the Iraqi people. A recent State Department poll revealed that little more than one out of every ten Iraqis watch IMN. Two out of three polled say they watch *Al Jazeera* or *Al Arabia* on satellite. If Ambassador Paul Bremer wants his views heard by the Iraqi people he would be well advised to buy time on *Al Jazeera*.

- The British Government program "Toward Freedom" was scheduled daily in spite of strong objections of the IMN staff. This hour program, directly financed by number 10 Downing Street, is aired without attribution. Iraqis conditioned by 35 years of Saddam's State Television recognize propaganda when they see it.

The stakes are high, and getting higher every day. President George W. Bush has spoken of "engaging in the battle of ideas in the Arab world." But in Iraq we have already lost the first round by failing to establish credible media, let alone influencing the rest of the Arab world.

In 1968, on the wall of the U.S. Embassy lobby in Saigon I noticed a framed quotation from "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," by Lawrence of Arabia: "It is better that they do it imperfectly than that you do it perfectly. For it is their war and their country and your time here is limited."

It seemed like a good idea to Lawrence in 1917 and it seemed like an even better idea to me in Vietnam in 1968. So, 35 years later, I gave that same quote to both Jay Garner and Paul Bremer our proconsuls in Baghdad and respectfully suggested they keep it in mind. There is no evidence that either of them ever did.

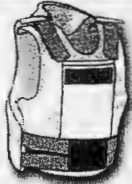
Forget The Colonial Attitude

Forget the colonial attitude of Lawrence and his heirs that the locals would only do it "imperfectly." Iraqis are in fact much better suited to repairing 1950s' technology in electric power stations, collecting street intelligence to combat terrorism and yes; Iraqis are entirely capable of reporting and producing television news and entertainment for their fellow Iraqis. It is time to show Iraqis the respect due by letting them do it themselves. It is time to help them to select their own path to a democratic new Iraq. As John Milton urged in 1644 before the British Parliament "Let truth and falsehood grapple. Who ever knew truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?"

Don North is an independent producer, journalist and journalism teacher based in Fairfax, VA. He was formerly a correspondent in Vietnam, Washington and the Middle East for ABC and NBC News. He accepted a position with the defense contractor, Science Applications International (SAIC), in January 2003, and arrived in Baghdad on 20 April as Senior TV Advisor and Trainer for IMN. He left Baghdad on 24 July. ☒

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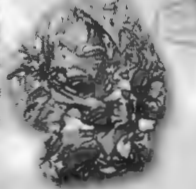
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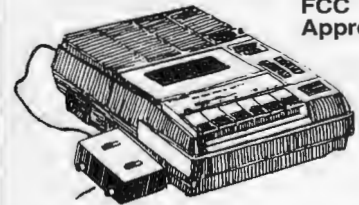
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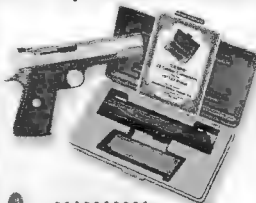
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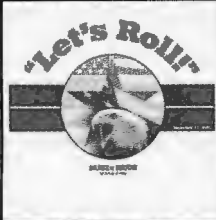
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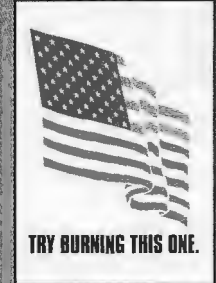
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BY DALE B. COOPER

S elected members of the First Marine Expeditionary Force went to war in Iraq last year with a new rifle in their hands. A total of 250 of the M16A4s, fitted with Advanced Combat Optic Gunsights, or ACOGs, were purchased for the IMEF. Individual Marines who carried the new rifle into battle were known as a Squad Advanced Marksmen. SAM for short.

The Marine Corps decided in the spring of 2002 to replace its aging M16A2s with 65,000 new M16A4s but went to war before the changeover could be accomplished.

A limited number of the new rifles with 4-power tritium gas-filled gunsights were handed out to assault battalions in IMEF and battle sight zeroed [BZO'd] before hostilities began, but Fabrique Nationale was unable to manufacture enough of the new weapons to equip all ground combat elements in IMEF. The plant in Columbia, South Carolina could only produce 1,500 of the new rifles each month, but Fabrique Nationale sent what it could to Kuwait.

Unfortunately, thousands of M16A4s arrived too late to be BZO'd and distributed before IMEF crossed the line of departure. So they were stored in warehouses and handed-out after the end of major hostilities.

Distribution of 250 new rifles that did make it to ground combat elements were given initially to only "Expert Marksmen." However, there is no hard fast rule in the Marine Corps that only Expert Marksmen can be issued the new weapons.

Commanders like Lieutenant Colonel Fred Padilla, in 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, the unit this reporter was embedded with during the war, apparently wanted his best shooters to have the new weapon. One member of each squad in 1/5 was given a brand new M16A4 with ACOG for a total of nine per infantry company.

The 4-power ACOG is filled with tritium, a rare radioactive hydrogen isotope, or "nuclear stuff" as one SAM told *SOF*. The gunsight — manufactured by Trijicon at a cost of approximately six hundred bucks per — was put on the new rifle to increase accuracy and target identification.

Major Mike Manning, a former infantry officer who is now the Team Leader in the Infantry Weapons Section at the Marine Corps Systems Command, at Quantico, Virginia, says the Corps has been talking for years about putting glass optics on service rifles. As a result of initial feedback from those who used the weapon in Iraq, the Marine Corps has purchased an additional 1,083 ACOGs from Trijicon.

However, Maj. Manning hastened to point out that a final decision on equipping *all* rifles issued to ground combat elements, i.e. rifle companies, has not been made. Several other optic sights are also under consideration.

Leathernecks in IMEF heard rumors about a new rifle before deploying to Kuwait from Camp Pendleton, California, in January 2003, but didn't get their hands on the weapon until they reached several LSAs, or Living Service Areas, spread out in the Kuwait desert about 30 miles below the Iraqi border.

"We're not snipers," said Corporal Walter Fulton, from 3rd Squad, 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, who along with other expert marksmen like Corporal John McFarling, from 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, were issued M16A4s with ACOGs, "but it does take some skill and it also takes a special individual to be a SAM," said the 25-year-old Marine from Orange County, California.

"... The Rifle Does The Rest."

Fulton and McFarling and seven other SAMs in the battalion didn't get many training days on the new weapon.

They spent only a couple of days at the Camp Grizzly Range, about 30 miles below the Iraq border in northern Kuwait, learning how to pre-determine unknown distance, known distance and then engaging targets out to 1,000 meters with the daylight scope. Each Marine fired fewer than 100 rounds as he zeroed his weapon.

Instead of crosshairs in the fixed 4-power scope, the ACOG has a red triangle in the shape of a Pfc. chevron. The tip of the triangle is sighted in at 100 meters. The middle is 200 meters and the bottom of the triangle will allow the shooter to hit a man-sized target at 300 meters. A grid on the bottom of the reticule gives distances out to 800 meters in 400-, 600- and 800-meter increments.

"Just cover the enemy's shoulders with the bottom of the chevron and squeeze the trigger," said McFarling as he showed me his new rifle at Camp Coyote which was one of the LSAs below the Iraq border, "and the rifle does the rest."

The ACOG gives Marines the ability to identify targets at distances up to 800 meters under poor light conditions, and yet maintains the ability to acquire targets in Military Operations in Urban Terrain, often referred to as MOUT.

In a paper entitled, "Operation Iraqi Freedom Lessons Learned," Major General James N. Mattis, commanding general of the First Marine Division, stated that the "M16A4 with an ACOG is an extremely accurate weapon and a confidence-multiplier."

On the first day of use in southern Iraq, on 21 March, Mattis states that "a Pfc. made two 1,300-yard hits on a man-sized target with the weapon system."

On page 15 of the document, which was sent to the Commanding General 1MEF, Mattis recommended that every Marine in ground-combat elements in 1MarDiv be issued an M16A4 with *some kind of optic* as their primary weapon.

Mystery Marksman

SOF has attempted to track down the Pfc. who scored those remarkable hits, but as late as last fall, the identity of the ACOG gunner is still unknown.

"Never heard that story," said Corporal McFarling. Neither did Fulton. None of the infantry company commanders in 1/5 interviewed by SOF at Camp Pendleton in mid-October 2003 had heard the story either, but Captain Blair

Sokol, the former commanding officer of Alpha Company, says each of the nine ACOG gunners in his company scored between 3 and 7 confirmed kills during the war.

One of the most interesting engagements occurred on the second day of the war when an Iraqi came roaring out of a trench line on a dirt bike near Pumping Station No. 2 in the Rumalya oil fields just inside the border in southern Iraq.

This reporter watched as 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Alpha Company opened fire. Every Squad Automatic Weapon and M16A2 opened-up. A steady stream of lead converged on the biker, as "Evil al-Kneivel" headed up the side of a sand berm.

There was some confusion in the ranks about Rules of Engagement. Nobody knew if it was okay to start shooting, but McFarling felt the guy on the dirt bike might be a forward observer who was trying to get word to somebody that we were out in their front. McFarling didn't wait for someone to clarify the ROE. He simply opened fire.

"The guy was traveling so fast, I had to adjust my fire with a tracer every third round. I saw a big cloud of dust when he went down," said McFarling, but it's widely debated to this day as to who dropped him. Unbelievably, the Iraqi soldier, shot in the neck and nicked in the jaw, survived the fusillade, and was captured.

Corporal Fulton didn't fire his weapon again until the war was well underway. On 1 April, when Bravo and Charlie Companies crossed the Saddam Hussein Canal under heavy mortar- and artillery-fire from an estimated battalion of enemy soldiers dug-in on the other side of the waterway in south-central Iraq, Fulton and his buddies made contact with the enemy in a series of berms about 300 meters off of Highway One, the main drag to Baghdad.

"As soon as they saw us coming, they dropped their weapons and started running," said Fulton, who dropped to a kneeling position and tattooed an Iraqi soldier in the upper body, blowing him backwards behind the berm.

After 2nd Lieutenant Therrel Childers, 1st Platoon commander, Alpha Co., was killed on 21 March, the first morning of the war, the only thing Fulton wanted was "revenge." But he didn't get it at the Battle of the Saddam Canal.

"I wanted to actually see the person I killed. See their facial expression," confessed Fulton after the war, but he didn't get to do that at the canal. The distance was too great.

Fulton's second kill came a week later on the outskirts of Baghdad when his platoon advanced through waist-high weeds and knocked-out an Iraqi armored personnel vehicle with an AT-4 rocket. When one of the armored assault vehicles [AAVs] in Charlie 1/5 lit-up a tent near the enemy BMP, an Iraqi soldier tried to escape. Fulton fired two shots off-hand at 350 meters, cutting-down the soldier in mid-stride.

Kill Number Three came on 7 April at the Diyala River after Charlie Co. made its first river-crossing in combat and took up positions across the river in Saddam City on the northeast side of Baghdad. While Counter Mech Platoon, the unit this reporter rode with during the war crossed the river on a pontoon bridge built by the First Combat Engineer Battalion, Fulton and his squad crossed the river in their AAV.

"We couldn't see out. It was an eerie



Charlie Co. Squad Advanced Marksman in foreground on Grizzly Range battle zeroing in his West Coast Rifle.

USMC photo by Sgt. Kevin Reed



Corporal Walter Fulton (left) about to take 300-meter shot at Iraqi soldiers across the Diyala River as Corporal Allen Cook covers him.

feeling being locked up in there,” recalled Fulton who was anxious to get out on dry ground, even if it meant facing the enemy again.

“Fulton Dropped Him With One Shot ...”

Once across the river, Fulton and Corporal Allen Cook, another team leader in 1st Platoon, got out of their “Tuna Boat,” as the AAVs are called, and took up firing positions in a bomb crater.

Cook covered Fulton as he cut down on an Iraqi soldier about 350 yards across the river on the roof of a building. “Fulton dropped him with one shot,” said Cook.

“We got our first contact from that building,” said Fulton as he recalled hearing two pops, POW-POW.

McFarling didn’t fire his new rifle again until the early morning hours of 10 April when 1/5 entered Baghdad and was subjected to the world’s longest drive-by shooting. He fired at several Saddam Fedeyeen guerrillas in the shadows, but doesn’t know if he hit any of them.

Standing overhead watch with five other Marines in Track No. 4, Fulton watched the battle unfold in his night-vision goggles.

Fulton’s AAV started taking fire as soon as it went through the “Wheel,” a major traffic circle in Baghdad. But like Counter Mech Platoon behind a phalanx of M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks, Charlie Co. had to cross over a media strip on a boulevard and run another gauntlet of fire back down the opposite side of the road.

For the first time since entering Iraq, Fulton felt he might not survive the war.

“There were people with AK-47s and RPGs firing down on us from second floors of buildings along the boulevard,” but Fulton didn’t fire a shot until later in the morning when Charlie Co. was fragged (ordered) to go to a 10-digit grid near the Al Azimiyah Palace on the Tigris River and capture Saddam Hussein who had allegedly been spotted in the upscale neighborhood of Mansour.

As 1st Platoon went from house-to-house in a city block that had been cordoned-off, Fulton and his buddies took fire from a building across the street. He responded with a few bursts of fire, enough to keep Iraqi heads down until the unsuccessful sweep was completed.

Fulton would have loved to have seen Saddam. “I’d love to have put him in the ground,” but there was no sign of Saddam at that 10-digit grid.

McFarling who had not fired his M16A4 since the invasion, nailed 6 to 8 Iraqis on a road leading to the Iman Abdu Hanifah Mosque in Baghdad. 1st Platoon provided security as 2nd and 3rd Platoons searched for high-ranking members of the Ba’ath party believed to be hiding in the mosque. More than 100 Saddam Fedeyeen fighters fell in battle at the mosque as bizarre music blared from the minaret.

“It was the creepiest thing I have ever heard,” said McFarling, “It didn’t sound like the usual call to prayer music. It sounded like some weird recording they had made just for us ... like we were walking into a huge ambush.”

McFarling could see the enemy darting between tombstones and mausoleums in a cemetery down the road from the mosque, firing AK-47s from the hip. Hundreds of rounds ricocheted off the markers, but neither side scored many hits.

Some Marines, like Lance Corporals Ryan Harnish and Brandon Wingle, SMAW [Shoulder-launched Multi-purpose Assault Weapon] gunners attached to 2nd Platoon, tried to shoot out the loudspeakers, but couldn’t silence the eerie



USMC photo by Sgt. Kevin Reed

Force RECON Marines' NEW BOOK

BY GIL MACKLIN

Every once-in-a-while, a new book comes along that enhances my professional military library. Such is the case with Major Bruce H. "Doc" Norton's latest work.

The Encyclopedia of American War Heroes is a great book!

This coffee-table-sized work is a combat veteran's effort to produce "a sampling of American war heroes from 1600s to 2002. He has done that, and more, and this is a book worth keeping!

The Encyclopedia of American War Heroes was written as a *Facts On File* reference book, one that should be in every library across the country.

Listed are more than 400 entries featuring the heroic, battlefield deeds of fighting men and women, who have gallantly fought and died during military service to the U.S. of A.

In his introduction, Maj. Norton sets the parameters for who should qualify as a "war hero" and states in no uncertain terms his view for membership in this unique collection of individuals. Norton also stresses the point that this book is "only a sampling" of our nations' heroes and heroines. He went so far as to ask his former Force Recon Company Commander, Lt. Col. Alex Lee, USMC, who, he thought should qualify as a genuine war hero to write the introduction. Lieutenant Colonel Lee's answer is profound, and worth the price of the book.

All entries are arranged alphabetically by the individual's last name, rank, branch of service, and the circumstances resulting in citations for heroism. All branches of the U.S. military are represented as are Native Americans and Confederate soldiers. Additionally, there is an informative section describing the criteria differences for awarding of the Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, The Silver Star and the Bronze Star Medal. This encyclopedia also contains individual's photographs, an appendix of American war statistics, a bibliography of print and on-line sources, and a general index of all entries.

Lastly, this book should be viewed as a most valuable addition for all public high schools and academic libraries, as there is nothing quite so extensive available today. I hope that we will see Volumes II and III in the not-too-distant future. A hearty "well done" to Maj. Norton for his exceptional efforts in producing a well researched and well documented *Encyclopedia of American War Heroes*.

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music. Harnish did shoot and kill an Iraqi who darted from behind a tombstone, with an AK-47 slung over his back and an RPG in his hands.

"The kid showed no fear in the face of certain death and he knelt in front of me and prepared to fire the rocket-propelled grenade," said Harnish who had a faster trigger finger, and blew the kid backwards with a burst of bullets across his upper chest.

A few minutes later, Harnish had his bell rung by an RPG, but the rocket-propelled grenade failed to explode when it hit his Kevlar helmet, and knocked him off the firing platform of his amtrac.

"The only thing I remember," said Harnish, "is waking up with the hot round in my lap." A buddy picked up the RPG and hurled it out of the AAV. But it didn't explode.

While at Camp Pendleton in mid-October last year doing some follow-up interviews with McFarling, Fulton and Cook, I met Harnish at 1/5's headquarters. I hadn't seen him since I saw him behind the Al Azimiyah Palace waiting to be airlifted to Kuwait.

I remember him talking to his fiancé on my satellite phone and telling her he was all right. It wasn't until the Marine Corps called his mother that his family realized how lucky Harnish had been.

High Marks For New Rifle

Company commanders like Capt. Sokol like M16A4 rifle, because in the hands of an expert marksman, ACOG gunners can protect his flanks with precision-fire. The new rifle also facilitates the conservation of ammo. In Vietnam, it took thousands of rounds to kill a single Viet Cong or North Vietnamese soldier, but in Iraq, Sokol said, it took only a

Continued on page 79



Will This Be The Rifle That Replaces The M16?

BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

PHOTOS COURTESY HECKLER & KOCH

Designed for the United States Air Force for base security in 1959 by Armalite's L. James Sullivan and Robert Fremont, the AR-15 was soon adopted by the U.S. Army as the M16, and the rest is still making history.

However, all has not been well with the M16 in recent years, especially with the latest variant, the M4 Carbine. Reliability considerations are probably due to quality control rather than the design of the M4 itself, but reducing the length of the M16 has always come with its own set of problems.

Direct-Gas Operation

The direct-gas operating system was chosen by Eugene Stoner for his AR-10 for good reasons and it was passed along to the AR-15 in the same way. However, it was never intended for the harsh jungle fighting of Viet Nam, and was introduced to a gauntlet of new problems that were compounded by a change of the propellant and an additive. While corrections put the M16 back on track, shortening its barrel and gas system brought a whole new set of difficulties centering on bolt velocity, pressure curve, and etc. These problems didn't raise their ugly heads in Viet Nam largely because

FIRST LOOK:

H&K's
XM8
MODULAR
ASSAULT
WEAPON
SYSTEM



of the excellent support system in place, and the fact that the war ended not long after the XM177E2, or "Commando" version of the M16 was fielded.

A descendant of the "Commando," today's M4A1 Carbine is an excellent weapon — if properly maintained and fed the right ammunition, and it amounts to a product-improved version of the M4 Carbine of a decade ago. Still, the desert sands of the Middle East have magnified the problems of reliability, and there are those who are fighting to see it replaced.

The major mechanical complaints against the M4 Carbine, and in fact the entire M16 family of weapons, are its direct-gas system and its lack of a quick-change barrel. Although the direct-gas operation does increase the flow of powder residue into the mechanism, this is not, in and of itself, necessarily the major cause of malfunctions. What's more, changing the M16's barrel requires a vise, special wrench, headspace gauge and at least at least 10 minutes of time at the depot level. Still, as compared with other rifles, it is one the best of the breed.

The quick and simple way to replace the M16's barrel is by swapping out the complete upper receiver and barrel group, allowing the component to already be sighted in for any rifle it is installed on. However, there are other issues relating to design as well as modern materials means of production that were not available when the M16 was conceived. These perceived weak points have given rise to the Special Operations Forces Combat Assault Rifle (SCAR) Program to set requirements for the system to replace the M16 family of weapons, and in the wake of it a number of new weapons are being designed. One of them is the XM8.

In 2002, Heckler & Koch, of Germany, began development of a new assault rifle family that amounts to a close descendant of the HK G36 family of weapons. Called the XM8, this 5.56x45mm NATO (.223 Remington)-caliber rifle is essentially the 5.56x45mm component of the Objective Individual Combat Weapon (OICW) — XM29 KE (kinetic energy) — module, which is still under development. The XM8 will have added synthetic modular assemblies to allow it to be used as a stand-alone weapon. These assemblies include a multi-position/collapsible buttstock, forend, sight base, carrying handle, and bipod.

(left) The HK XM8 Baseline Carbine with 30-shot magazine inserted and retractable stock extended. (below) The XM8 Compact Carbine with 30-round magazine inserted and special butt cap installed.





The XM8 Automatic Rifle Variant with bipod deployed, stock extended, and 100-round high-capacity magazine inserted. (inset) The XM8 Baseline Carbine seen disassembled with various accessories.



Four Variations

Developed by the U.S. Army's Office of Project Manager for Soldier Weapons located at Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Infantry Center, the XM8 potentially will replace the M4 Carbine and other 5.56x45mm NATO weapons in the U.S. Army arsenal, beginning in 2005 — and at a significantly reduced cost per unit. As this is written, four XM8 variants are being developed including a baseline carbine, a sharpshooter variant, an automatic rifle, and an ultra-small compact carbine.

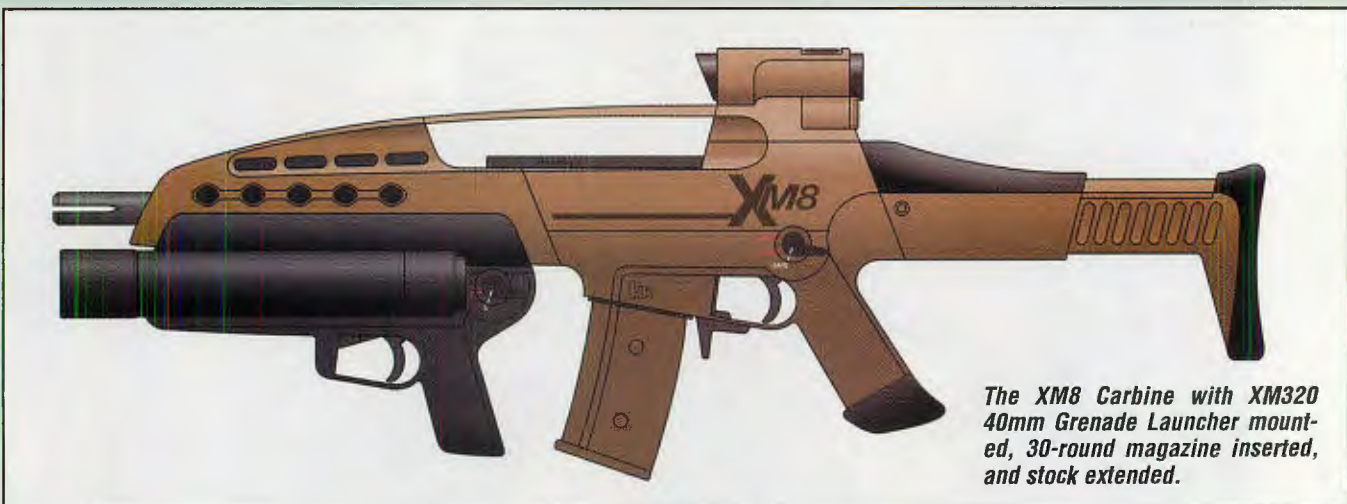
A unique feature of the XM8 is its ability to be quickly reconfigured from one variant to another to meet changing mission-specific requirements, and this includes a potential capability for caliber conversion to such rounds as the 7.62X39mm, 5.45x39mm, and the new 6.8x43mm cartridge. Modular assembly groups include the barrel, handguard, lower receiver, buttstock, butt cap, and sighting system including carrying handle. In addition, the HK XM320 40mm

grenade launcher and LSS lightweight 12-gauge shotgun modules can quickly be added to the XM8 in the field without tools.

Polymer In Many Colors

Employing a rotary bolt like the G36 (and M16) rifle, the XM8 also uses the G36's ambidextrous charging handle and selector, magazines, and above-bore short-stroke gas-piston system of operation. The weapon uses 10- or 30-round semi-transparent magazines, or 100-round high-capacity drum magazines for sustained-fire applications. Major components of the XM8 including its receiver are made from a high-strength fiber-reinforced polymer that can be molded in almost any color including OD green, desert tan, white, blue, gray, brown, and black. All areas that normally come in contact with the operator are covered with a non-slip material.

Special integral, flush mounting-points are located on the XM8's hand guard and receiver for fast- attaching targeting



The XM8 Carbine with XM320 40mm Grenade Launcher mounted, 30-round magazine inserted, and stock extended.

devices, and these points will also accept MILSTD M1913 adapters. Mounting points atop the receiver guarantee automatic return to zero of the multi-function integrated red-dot close-combat optic after being removed from the rifle. This optic also houses an IR laser aimer and laser illuminator, and comes factory bore-aligned. The sight's function is activated by a remote switch, and a wireless version is planned that can be placed anywhere on the XM8.

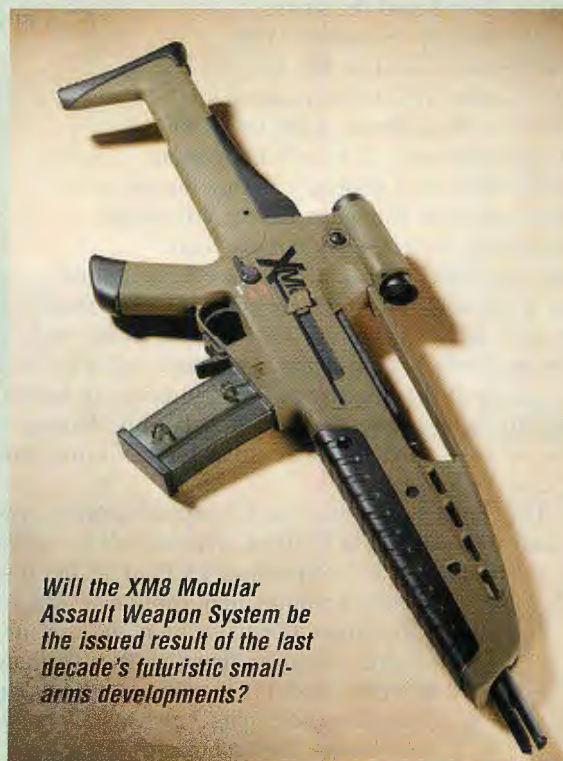
Service Life

In addition to its claimed 70% less cleaning time, the XM8 is expected to have a barrel and minimum component life of 20,000 rounds, compared to a reported 8,000 rounds for the M4. The XM8 has fired 15,000 rounds without cleaning or lubrication, and without stoppages or parts' failures. Because of its cold-hammer-forged barrel, the XM8 can be fired with water in the barrel without damage. The XM8's barrel also has blow-out safety vents in the event of a catastrophic chamber failure.

The XM8 is being designed at the HK Defense Design Center in Sterling, Virginia, U.S.A., and will be produced in the new Heckler & Koch manufacturing plant in Columbus, Georgia, right next to Fort Benning. Whether the new rifle can meet the requirements of the SCAR Program, much less replace the aging M16 family of weapons will remain to be seen. Admittedly, there are a number of features about the XM8 that appeal to specialized U.S. Military operators, but there are just as many which are not so welcomed. These include the carrying handle and the ambidextrous cocking handle.

A carrying handle is viewed by some as not only unnecessary, but also as a safety issue, e.g., the muzzle can be pointed either forward or to the rear when carried by the handle, and the rifle will not be in a ready position. Realizing this, H&K made the XM8's carry handle removable by the operator. The XM8's cocking handle is seen by some as a step backwards. Some U.S. SOF operators have found its ambidextrous features to serve both right and left handed shooters while eliminating the need for a forward assist, others argue against designing such a system to accommodate only a reported 10% of military fighters who are left handed, and desire the cocking handle be changed to one that works like that on the HK MP5 SMG. H&K staff close to the XM8 project contend that sooner or later right-handed operators might have to shoot the weapon from the left shoulder (or vice versa).

In the midst of these features is the fact that the reciprocating cocking handle lies exposed above and forward of the bolt carrier and precludes the inclusion of an uninterrupted mounting platform positioned low above the bore. H&K has a raised MILSTD M1913 ("Picatinny") rail that is fitted to this area in place of the carrying handle to bridge the access to the cocking handle, but mounting optics here places them higher



Will the XM8 Modular Assault Weapon System be the issued result of the last decade's futuristic small-arms developments?

HK XM8	
SPECIFICATIONS	
Caliber:	5.56x45mm NATO (.223 Remington)
Muzzle Velocity:	(M855) (20" bbl.) 3,114 fps (1,120 m/s) (12.5" bbl.) 2,706 fps (1,002 m/s) (9" bbl.) 2,410 fps (880 m/s)
System of Operation:	Short-stroke gas-piston
Method of Locking:	Positively locked, multi-lug rotary bolt
Mode of Fire:	Selective: Full-automatic and semiautomatic
Overall Length:	(carbine) (stock extended) 33 inches (838mm) (stock retracted) 30 inches (762mm) (approx.) (compact carbine) 20.5 inches (521mm) (approx.) (sharpshooter & automatic rifle) 40.5 inches (1,016mm)
Barrel Length:	(carbine) 12.5 inches (318mm) (assault compact carbine) 9 inches (229mm) (SS & auto rifle) 20 inches (508mm)
Rifling:	6-groove, 1-in 7 inch (177.8mm) RHT
Weight:	(carbine) 6.4 pounds (2.91 kg.) in prototype; 5.7 pounds objective
Cyclic Rate of Fire:	775 shots per minute
Feed Device:	10- or 30-shot box magazines; or 100-round drum
Safety:	Safety position on selector
Sights:	Fully integrated red dot with infrared illuminator and infrared pointer
Stock Furniture:	Fiber-filled resin in OD green, tan, white, brown or black
Finish:	MilSpec matte black

than on the M16 flattop receiver.

Whatever the outcome, make no mistake that there is high-level interest and money backing the adoption of the XM8 such as we have seldom seen. Sources in the know now give the XM8 at least a 50-50 chance of being our new Service rifle.

Semiautomatics Also?

If the XM8 is adopted, will there be a civilian semiautomatic-only version? An H&K insider reports that while the XM8 may be offered to law-enforcement agencies, a semiautomatic XM8 for public consumption is highly unlikely whether or not the Assault Rifle Ban is allowed to "sunset." If you didn't already need it, this an excellent reason to join the NRA and vote! Only free men (and women) can own guns, and we are some of the only free men left on the planet.

HK M4?

Although H&K's lips have been sealed about this, several inside sources report that the company has also developed a modified G36-type upper-receiver group to replace that of the standard M4 Carbine. This new upper receiver component is piston driven, fits on the standard M4/M16 lower receiver, and uses standard M16 NATO magazines. Heckler & Koch is clearly on the move! ☒



X.S. - T.R.A.

XS Sights Hosts A Symposium At Gunsite Academy

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

The term, "conventional" can be misleading, and when it is applied to gun sights is no exception. Ever heard the saying, "The more things change, the more they stay the same?" Well, take the express rear sight that has been used on big dangerous-game rifles for more than a century. Yes, it's been around for more than a century, but when we think of rear sights today, we often think of those with peep apertures. If we're talking about pistol sights, we normally think of a relatively narrow notch.

That's because express sights on handguns have pretty much been limited to big hunting revolvers, but not any more.

In fact, express rear sights on autopistols have been around now for almost a decade, and the same company that made them then is still doing it, but it's now known as XS Sight Systems (formerly A.O.). XS also makes aperture sights for long guns, but mainly in the "ghost ring"-configuration. In addition, the company makes Extended Eye Relief Scope Mounts for a number of rifles, and these are great for mounting scout-type scopes or reflex sights.

This fall I was invited to XS' annual writers symposium at Gunsite Academy, in Paulden, Arizona, where we were treated to a two-day test and evaluation (T&E) of XS' latest sights on a variety of pistols, carbines and shotguns. After inviting me, XS offered to equip a pistol, shotgun and carbine of my choice with their sights. I shipped them my Para-Ordnance 7.45 LDA and my Remington Model 870 shotgun to be equipped with Express and Ghost Ring XS Sights. I also installed one set of XS 24-7 Sights on a selective-fire Bushmaster .223 caliber XM15 CQB short-barreled



V · A · G · A · N · I · Z · A ·



(clockwise from top left) Interloping 3-foot Mohave, here with XS Sights-equipped Marlin .30-30 was dispatched for safety. The author takes on a 100-yard Pepper-popper with the First Samco-

equipped Bushmaster Carbine, and fires an XS-Sighted Marlin 30-30 at 200 yards from the Buck Bench. Shooters waited in line to use this portable table.

Carbine, and another on a Bushmaster Superlight Carbine equipped with a SIR System from A.R.M.S., along with a brand new tactical sling from Boonie Packer.

First Samco

In addition to the XS Sights, I equipped the little selective-fire Bushmaster carbine with a number of aftermarket accessories from First Samco. These included First Samco's 4-Rail Handguards, a Light Mount, Tactical Pistol Grip, Vertical Foregrip, and a Universal Mount to which I attached a QD sling swivel. This mount will also accept a Harris Bipod.

In the First Samco Light Mount, I mounted a SureFire Tactical Weapon Light. The company makes this mount in two sizes, one of which will accept smaller-diameter lights. Unique about First Samco accessories is that they are made of high-strength, lightweight polymer and are designed for instant attachment and equally fast removal thanks to their M1913 ("Picatinny")-style rail system.

In addition, I mounted a MagPul Modular Buttstock on the Bushmaster carbine. Fully adjustable for length of pull, this stock can also accommodate a variety of other accessory mounts. While the main tube of the stock is black, the retractable buttstock portion was in desert tan, and is the same configuration as that recently adopted by an elite element of the United States Marine Corps. This carbine was also equipped with a REDI-MAG System from Boonie Packer Products. This spare magazine carrier has also been adopted



by the same elite USMC group and holds a spare magazine on the rifle ready for instant use.

On my Bushmaster SuperLight Carbine, I installed the new lightweight Vltor ModStock buttstock with its spare battery carriers. On the bottom of the S.I.R. System I mounted a SureFire M982 Tactical Vertical Foregrip Weapon Light. Both of my SureFire Weapon Lights provided 125 lumens of bright white light ideal for operation in darkness both inside and out.

Sights Variations

Reminiscent of traditional express rear sights, the XS Express Rear Sight consists of a shallow "V" with a vertical white/tritium bar in the center. Complementing this is most often a "Dot" front sight with a

Bob Grassi shoots his XS-Sighted Glock in an outdoor simulator.

large round aiming point popularly referred to as a "big dot, or little dot, depending on the size." Consisting of a white circle, this front sight has a pale green center that is its tritium insert. The result is a white "pumpkin on a pole" in daylight and a similarly bright, light green scenario that glows in the dark.

For most popular pump and semi-automatic shotguns, XS has developed a rugged steel ghost-ring rear sight that is 100% machined steel, and is also fully adjustable for windage and elevation. A front sight can be had in a banded version with a protected tritium post, or a conventional ramp night sight, silver-soldered to the barrel. Mine was the latter, equipped with a white vertical line in the middle of the blade.

Replacing the front sight post on the AR-15, XS' 24-7 Front Sight amounts to a combat-ramped blade with a vertical tritium bar with a white outline. Only the rear of the blade has a tritium element, to keep it from being seen from the front by an adversary or enemy. The wisdom of this became very apparent during night-shooting, and this sight is popular with some elite military units. Useful in both bright and dim



Johnston fires his XS-Sighted Remington 870 shotgun using Hornady Light Recoil Buckshot.

light, this blade can be complimented by XS' constant-elevation flip, aperture rear sight. This rear aperture, designed by Giles Stock, has both the ghost-ring element and peep aperture on the same elevation plane from 0 to 200 yards, instead of as with the military version with the peep aperture elevated for use at extended ranges.

Living in Colorado, I made the seven-hour drive to Gunsite, where I found the weather to be perfect as I headed into the classroom for a briefing by Bob Radeki and Steve Barron, of XS Sights. In order to familiarize all with XS' various sight systems, Bob and Steve went over each one in detail before we all headed to the firing line.

In the morning we shot pistols on square ranges under the instruction of Giles Stock, where everyone got a feel for the sights, and Giles got a chance to evaluate the abilities of the shooters. After lunch we switched to shotguns, and it was the first time I had used XS' new Shotgun Ghost Ring, and it worked superbly.

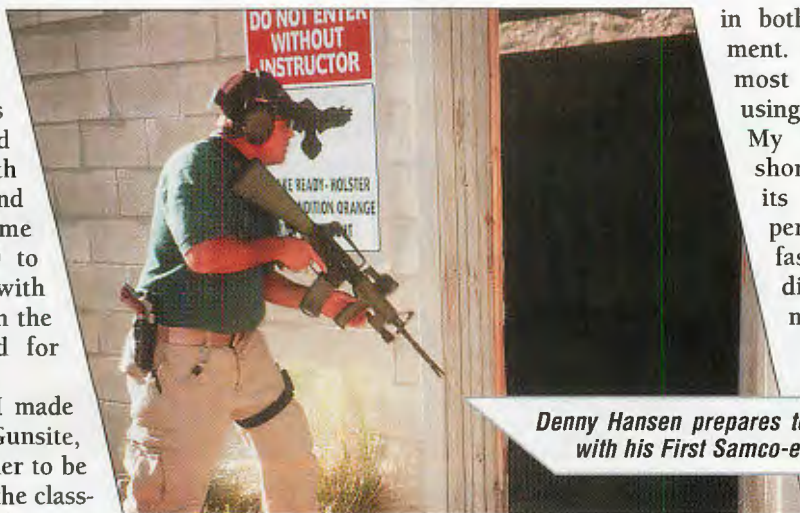
Present during the shotgun T&E was shotgun guru, Hans Vang, of Vang Comp. Systems, Inc. Hans brought along several guns equipped with his new BAR-STO barrels and XS Ghost Ring Sights in order to do a comparison. The various shotguns in the group were tested with several types of 12-gauge buckshot, and I used my new factory Remington 870 for a control comparison.

All factory 12-gauge buck performed dramatically better out of Vang Comp barrels than any standard factory barrels, except for one brand. While my new Remington 870 held its own pretty well out to 15 yards, the Vang Comp barrels took over past this distance and on out to 35 yards where they still kept all pellets on a silhouette target. However, that one brand of 12-gauge buck that worked about as well in my factory barrel as it did in the Vang Comp Barrel was Hornady, and that is exactly what it was designed to do.

While the Hornady ammunition in my barrel did not quite equal the performance of the Vang Comp barrel, it came far closer than any other load. Having attended Gunsite's 260 Shotgun Course with Hans Vang, this comparison brought no surprises to me, but a few others in our group were surprised.

After lunch we began shooting the various carbines including the Springfield Squad/Scout with its new SX Sights. After sighting in, we ran through some basic drills, and then went through one of the outside simulators with the .223 carbines using Winchester Frangible Ammunition on steel Pepper Popper targets.

For those who have not done a live-fire moving scenario with a carbine, pistol, or shotgun, this is a great experience



Denny Hansen prepares to enter an indoor simulator with his First Samco-equipped AR-15 Carbine.

in both tactics and shot-placement. After using the carbine, most went through it again using their XS-sighted pistols. My XS-sighted Bushmaster short-barreled carbine, with its First Samco accessories, performed very well in this fast-shooting scenario, as did my SuperLight Bushmaster Carbine.

After a great Barbecue

dinner given by Gunsite's owner, Buzz Mills, we returned to one of the square ranges shooting our XS-equipped pistols and carbines in the darkness both with and without light. Here where the XS tritium sights glowed bright, it became clear why only the rear of the AR-15 front sight can contain tritium. The illumination of these sights could be seen from surprisingly long distances with the naked eye, and night-vision devices (NVD) would intensify the small light hundreds of times.

The next morning we shot steel targets out to 200 yards with the carbines. For this, I set up my ODXS Buck Bench to shoot from, but it became so popular that I found myself waiting in line to use it. The Buck Bench is the handiest portable shooting platform I have ever used. Giles Stock spotted our hits with a brand-new mildot spotting scope from Leupold that can also be used to estimate range. This experience reinforced faith in the XS rifle sight by all present, nearly all of whom were past or present law-enforcement officers.

After live-fire entries on two indoor simulators, the next to the last event consisted of two drills with force-on-force using special pistols with dedicated Simunitions conversions with one of the instructors playing the assailant, a role he must have filled in a



Here, three of Johnston's guns are seen with a Streamlight that was furnished, some of the ammunition used, and Leupold's brand new Mildot Spotting Scope. All guns were fitted with XS Sights, and the carbine used accessories from First Samco, Boonie Packer, and MagPul.

former life. After removing anything from our persons that could be used as a weapon, we suited-up with protective clothing and headgear for the two "Sims" drills using the pistol of choice.

Limited to law-enforcement training, the "Sims" drills are unlike anything most shooters have ever experienced, as they are done using real guns that shoot special Simunitions projectiles in true semi-automatic, and they can cause some injury. What also makes it different is that one shooter is pitted against another who is a true adversary with much experience in this game. I had won one of these drills during my

Continued on page 77

SOFT PROVING ground

THE COBB FA50

This Fast-Action .50 BMG Rifle's A Winner!

BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

IT was nearly 30 years ago that I fired my first .50 BMG-caliber rifle. It was a converted British Boyes bolt-action and it had hefty recoil. In the years that have followed, I've fired a host of other .50 BMG rifles including bolt actions, semi-automatics, and single shots, but I've never seen anything like the COBB Fast-Action .50.

Recently, I was offered the chance to fire the first prototype of the COBB FA50 (T) and, as I write this, the rifle is in full-production. Not a semi-automatic rifle, the FA50 is a repeating bolt-action, but not in any sense of the word you are probably thinking of. Amounting to a scaled-up AR-15-type action, the COBB FA50 uses a number of parts from the AR-15 including most of those in the trigger group, as well as some in the recoil spring

group does not act quite in the usual way.

You see, instead of gas, or a conventional bolt, the COBB operates by straight pull. To cock or feed a round from the magazine, the operator pulls the operating handle all the way back and releases it. In doing this, the cocking handle pulls the giant AR-15-type bolt carrier to the rear where it cams the multi-lug bolt to rotate and unlock. Both of these parts then follow the cocking handle to the rear. When released, the recoil spring drives the bolt group forward just as in the AR-15, and strips a round from the 10-shot magazine, if present, and chambers it.

The COBB FA50 seen on its bipod with Leupold MkIV 16X .50 BMG Tactical Scope.



COBB FA50

SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	.50 BMG
Muzzle Velocity:	3,000 fps
Operation:	Straight-pull, bolt-action repeater
Barrel Length:	30" Lothar-Walther 1-in-15" RHT with Armalite muzzle brake
Overall Length:	58"
Weight:	29 pounds
Feed Device:	10-round box magazine (2 furnished)
Safety:	AR-15-type safety/selector
Sights:	None. Integral M1913 rail on receiver for optical sights
Stock Furniture:	Vltor ModStock and ERGO competition pistol grip (M16A2 stock optional)
Finish:	MilSpec Parkerized
Price:	\$5,600.00 (suggested retail) with Starlight hard case



The COBB FA50 fieldstripped. Rifle comes apart without tools much like an AR-15 rifle. (below) Johnston shoots the COBB FA50 from the bench at 100 yards. The rifle proved very accurate in spite of a heavy wind.



Locked into the top of the bolt carrier via a cross dovetail, the cocking handle rides in a slot on the left side of the action and reciprocates with the bolt group. The safety/selector is standard AR-15 and works in exactly the same way. Although it is longer than standard, the magazine catch is otherwise identical to that of the AR-15/M16 and locks the special COBB 10-shot magazine firmly in place.

The Lothar-Walther Match-Grade 30-inch barrel is fixed into the upper receiver in the same manner as an AR-15 barrel, and is replaceable in the field using only a simple spanner wrench. The barrel is free floating and is surrounded by a ventilated steel tube that has a mounting stud for the M60 bipod on the front. Cobb uses the very efficient Armalite AR-50 muzzle brake on the FA50.

Held together by two AR-15-type cross pins, the upper and lower receivers will hinge on the front pin, or can be separated by pulling out both pins using the handy rings attached to them. Since the rifle's lower receiver is identical to that of the AR-15/M16 at the rear, the FA50 uses any AR-15 pistol grip, and also uses a standard AR-15 recoil-spring tube. This means that the rifle is compatible with any stock that will fit on the AR-15 rifle. The prototype I tested was equipped with a custom wooden butt stock fitted with a recoil pad and a wooden competition-style pistol grip, but I was told the wooden parts were just for show.

The 10-round magazine for the FA50 is designed and produced by COBB. Materials used in the COBB FA50 are as follows: Bolt — 4340 steel; bolt carrier — 4150 steel; receiver — T7075 aircraft alloy.

The prototype COBB FA50 also had no iron sights, but was mounted with a Leupold MKIV 16X .50 BMG Tactical Scope on its MilSpec M1913 ("Picatinny")-type rail. On this rail can also be mounted various A.R.M.S. M1913 rails to increase the height of the optic. Auxiliary open sights are also an option.

Shots Fired

Anxious to shoot the FA50, I took it to the range along with a batch of .50

BMG ammunition that included some custom match from the Hunting Shack, Arizona Ammunition, Talon, and some new .50-caliber ammo from Mitchell Mausers.

In firing an initial round to sight-in, I was surprised at the FA50's relatively light recoil, which I would compare with that of a full-power 12-gauge shotgun slug fired from the bench. Although I was wearing only a T-shirt, there was no discomfort, no doubt thanks largely to the muzzle brake and the recoil pad.

In shooting for accuracy, I had no difficulty producing 3-shot groups of 1.5 MOA or less at 100 yards, this in spite of the morning cross wind that increased to more than 30 mph before noon. Because of this, I didn't shoot any groups at longer ranges, but I did shoot at a few rocks and other targets out to 400 yards, and found the FA50 easy to make hits with. However, the .50 BMG from Mitchell Mausers was noticeably hotter than the rest of the loads, and chamber-sticking was a problem. On the last round fired, I had to yank the charging handle several times before it extracted, but all that came out was the head of the case, leaving the rest stuck in the chamber. Although I would not fire any more from this lot of Mitchell ammunition, it did prove accurate. There's no doubt in my mind that this rifle will do anything any other fifty will do, and it did a lot better than some others I've fired.

The COBB's straight-pull action was particularly pleas-

ant to use, as the right hand does not have to be removed from the pistol grip. In fact, I think the FA50 is almost as fast as if it were a gas-operated semi-automatic. However, by the time this reaches you, that will likely prove to be wrong.

A Really Fast-Action Cobb

In anticipation of military requirements, there is already a gas-operated semi-automatic COBB .50 BMG rifle on the drawing board. Without going into detail as to its exact operation, I can say that it is literally as simple as proverbial pie. While several military establishments have requested samples of the FA50 for T&E, COBB feels that the semi-automatic version will prove most popular there.

Druthers

Although most of the COBB FA50's features suited me just fine, I did make several suggestions that have already been implemented. These included replacing the wooden pistol grip with one of the ERGO grips from Falcon Industries, and the wooden butt stock with the new modular ModStock from Vltor, or an M16A1 butt stock. With the new sling-swivel adapter from B&T Industries, the M16A1 or A2 stock can use the adjustable ACCU-SHOT vertical rest. All other suggestions I made had already been implemented in the final FA50 production design.

After close examination of the prototype COBB FA50 and shooting it, I think this is one of the finest .50 BMG rifles I have ever tested, and I'll be anxious to wring out the production model. If you're looking for a high-precision .50 BMG rifle, check out what's available from COBB Mfg., Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 88, Dallas, GA 30106; phone: 770-505-3080; www.cobb50.com . ☒

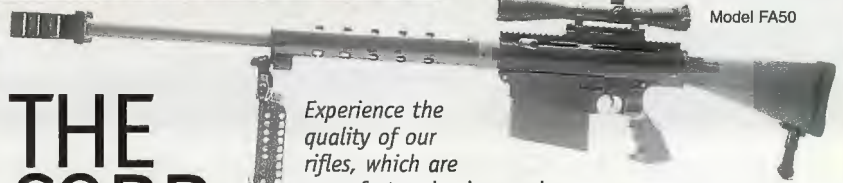
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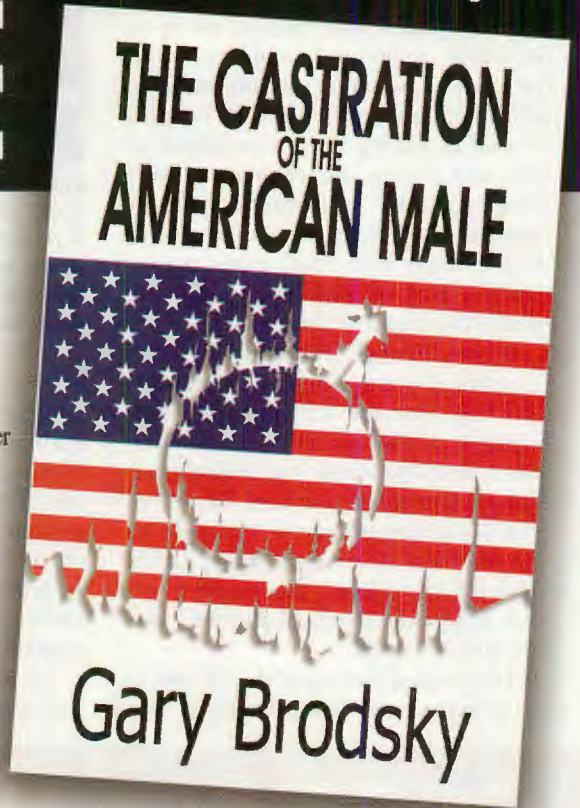
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Heroin Trade

Continued from page 49

led our own personal army (the MRF) and acted upon low-level source intelligence gathered from within, not intel passed down from higher to us.

Ideally, we would have had helicopters take us to our distant targets, like the drug labs that morning. A half-dozen Black Hawks or a couple of Chinooks could have picked us up at our MRF compound, and we could have been on target within minutes instead of hours, arriving with very little risk of having been seen ahead of time and losing the element of surprise. But the helicopters were at Bagram Air Base (near Kabul), a 40-minute flight away and, more importantly, a part of Task Force 180, the overall command of the theater.

It was enough that our CJSOTF (Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, located at Bagram, the command of all the Special Forces battalions and ODAs within the Afghanistan theater) had to ask (or beg) TF-180 to lend helicopter support to resupply us and the two dozen-odd other ODAs scattered throughout the country; we were not going to get choppers for our operations. Period.

The general feeling of the SF guy in the boonies was that, though it had



Five members of ODA 2025 pose in a blooming poppy field along with four attachments. (L-R) ODA: Terry, Laval, Greg, Dean, Brian; Attachments: USAF's Tac-P Lou, OGA Mike, A.D. Miller, TPT Rob. (opposite) Much of the subversive forces in Afghanistan are funded by the opium/heroin trade. An essential ingredient to the processing is acidic acid anhydride. The 55-gallon drums here are some of the 300 uncovered in a rural cache, moved down into the ditch and set ablaze. Overwatching is Sergeant First Class Laval.

been SF who had initially won the ground war and it was then SF who was keeping the Taliban and al-Qaeda from crossing the border from Pakistan and reestablishing themselves, TF-180's attitude toward Special Forces was that of a haughty father to a distant stepchild — as it always seems to be when conventional units have command over SF.

So, we rode to war in our Toyotas. And a better truck than the Tacoma I

can't imagine. We beat ours to death in arguably the roughest terrain in the world, eastern Afghanistan, and we just couldn't break them. Like tough, battered, big, steel Energizer bunnies, they kept going and going and going.

That morning in November we'd sped down an empty Highway 1 for a half-hour then been jarred and bounced for two hours on dirt roads. We were now "five minutes out." Our target: Two adjacent compounds that we were pretty

CAPTAIN JIM

The common saying "Well, he's no rocket scientist" sure isn't applicable to ODA 2025's team leader, Captain Jim. With advanced degrees in Physics, Space Systems Engineering, and Aerospace Engineering (Propulsion) (with an in-work Ph.D.), Jim is a rocket scientist and demonstrates the diversity of knowledge and skills that National Guard Special Forces soldiers often bring to the military.

A former NASA scientist as a Shuttle Systems Engineer at the Kennedy Space Center, as well as an adjunct professor for Spacecraft Propulsion at the Florida Institute of Technology, Jim moved to his present job as an Engineering Physicist for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California, just months before 9-11. His assignment at JPL: the Mars 07 project, named "Mars Science Lander." As he explains it, he is "the Principle Investigator on a proposal to explore the near-surface layers of the Martian surface using explosive-shaped charges and seismic detectors." Say what?

Mobilized for Operation Enduring Freedom in January 2002 with B Company, 1st Battalion, 20th SFG, Captain Jim managed in what limited spare time he had during various deployments, including his seven months in Afghanistan, to fulfill his commitment to JPL to write the navigation soft-

ware for the Mars spacecraft launched in 2003.

If all that makes Jim an egghead, think again. Along with being a graduate of the Special Forces Qualification Course, Jim is also a graduate of the physically grueling Combat Diver and Dive Supervisor courses. And if all that makes him a *brainiac* stud, again, think again. Jim is also a professional musician, having done studio work and performed in various groups on keyboard, trumpet and trombone, not to mention, while in college, having had his own Dixieland band that had a two-year gig at "Storyville" in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

How, one might ask, does Jim have time for a regular life? At 39, he is raising, with his wife (herself a Ph.D. in Mathematics), their four children and her four. Whew ...!

That's the thing with National-Guard Special Forces. Replace the uniform with civvies, and one never knows what one will find.



Captain Jim of ODA 2025, renaissance man personified.

confident were opium-processing labs.

Our mission in Afghanistan was not anti-drug — just the opposite. We were directed *not* to interfere with the opium and heroin trade — it was off-limits. But the intel that our senior medic, Laval, was getting from his just-cranking-up-into-high-gear low-level-source network was that much of the Shin War opium/heroin trade was controlled by Taliban or ex-Taliban.

Laval's sources were reporting that much of the money from the trade was supporting Taliban operatives in their safe haven in Pakistan. We had learned that these two labs we were headed for were owned and run by a Taliban supporter, one Hajji Watan. Our mission

ed by the Americans, to do the job. Knowing that the Brits were using this as a way to re-equip themselves at someone else's expense, the U.S. refused to come up with the money. In return, the Brits sat back and did nothing.

The Special Forces Warrior Spirit

Along came our Captain Jim saying that we had intel confirming that the Taliban was running the drug trade in our AO and, moreso, that we had a pretty good lead on the locations of several active rural labs. According to Jim, the colonel and the powers above looked at this as an opportunity to show the Brits that the job could be done without the extra equipment. The colonel gave his



that day: bust the labs, hoping to nab Watan, which could possibly put us on to the location of even bigger Taliban.

At least, that's how our team commander, Captain Jim, had explained our intentions to the Special Forces colonel who commanded the CJSOTF. The colonel was 20th Group's commander at the time, and this was a first for Special Forces — a National Guard group being given the opportunity and responsibility of combat-theater command. But in these days when the active-duty Special Forces groups are taxed to the max worldwide, it's not likely to be the last.

The colonel had made it clear to Captain Jim that disturbing the Shin War heroin trade had international ramifications that went beyond simply putting a hurt on the European supply of the drug. Besides the fact that the U.S. really hadn't implemented a carved-in-stone anti-Afghanistan-drug policy, the task of dealing with the Shin War opium trade had been given to the British armed forces in the country. But the Brits had been arguing that they needed millions of dollars for new gear, provid-

tacit approval, making it clear, though, Jim told us, that should something go wrong and blame come down from above, that it would be denied that the conversation had ever taken place.

It didn't matter to us; we just wanted the opportunity, any opportunity, to engage the enemy. In our short time in-country, we'd already captured two absolutely humongous ammunitions caches, both without a shot fired. We'd driven innumerable presence patrols ... without a shot fired. We'd busted Taliban money-laundering operations ... without a shot being fired. One time, we'd gathered the intel, worked out the plan and ridden six hours concealed in the backs of jingle trucks on a High Value Target (HVT — a high-ranking Taliban- or al-Qaeda-operative)-snatch, only to be called back at the last minute because the Delta boys (now known as CAG, pronounced like "nag") working out of Kabul had gotten wind of our mission and wanted it for themselves. What Delta wants, Delta gets, so they snatched that snatch mission from us, riding to the rural site in Delta-style; not in jingle trucks or



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Tacomas, but rather — who would have guessed it? — in helicopters.

A guy doesn't become SF because he wants to shuffle papers or pass out meds or ammo in the rear with the gear, or because he wants to turn over his missions to Delta. He's SF because he wants to be where the action is and wants to feel the whiz of bullets over his head and the deafening crack of his own return fire from his carbine. It doesn't matter how old he gets, the warrior spirit rarely dies.

For example, a former 12th-Special-Forces-Group (deactivated in 1995) buddy of mine was called to active duty soon after 9-11, at 58 years of age, to teach on the Weapons Committee at the SF Qualification Course. This is a man who in the mid-1960s served two tours of Vietnam as a Marine, went to college afterward, became a Green Beret in the Reserves, and had a successful career at the top levels of the California Department of Transportation. When I ran into him at Fort Bragg just prior to my going to Afghanistan, though he was a great teacher and loved his job in the Q-Course, he pleaded with me to find him a position, any position, anywhere in 20th Group so that he wouldn't be left out of the fight. That's the SF warrior spirit.

As a National-Guard ODA of guys who had put on-hold their civilian careers and families to participate in the War on Terror, we welcomed the opportunity for a fight. Personally, I could care less about the availability of a heroin fix for a junkie on the streets of Paris or Berlin. If a fool wants to shoot-up, cheers to him, and I shed no tears when he ODs. If a society has illegal drug usage it wants ended, I believe the fight has to be taken to the users — not the foreign suppliers, in particular, not the dirt-poor Afghan (or, for that matter, Bolivian) farmer who is simply making the best living he can in Third- and Fourth-World circumstances. Now, if those foreign drug operations are supplying money to our sworn enemies — the Taliban and al-Qaeda — that's a different story. And they're fair game.

These labs we were going after, owned and operated by this unknown Taliban, Hajji Watan, would be our game this morning, just five minutes from now. And it was anyone's guess about the ferocity of the coming action just up ahead.

Next month in Part 2, ODA 2025 hits the lab — and gets more than it bargained for. ✕

XS-Travaganza

Continued from page 69

last class at Gunsite earlier this year, but I knew our "bad guy" would not let it happen again, and he didn't. Even though I shot him first each time, it was 50-50. Every time you go through one of these you learn something, and one thing I learned was the value of having sights you just can't miss seeing even under the most demanding circumstances.

The final event was Gunsite's Scrambler, a running course of fire using any type of firearm. While walking the shooters through this course, Giles just missed stepping on a 3-foot Mojave rattlesnake coiled at the final stage. I yelled at him and he stepped away before it could strike. I moved the snake some 15 yards away while we



First Samco's vertical foregrip and SureFire Tactical Light worked well together on the Picatinny rail hand-guards. (below) This shooter goes prone at 200 yards with an XS-Sighted Springfield M1A Squad/Scout rifle.



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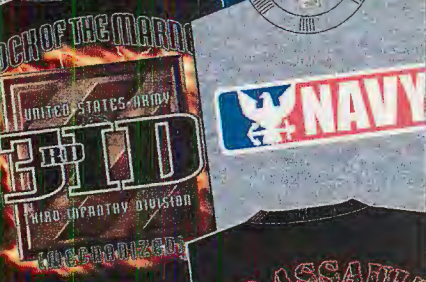


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completed the course, and then retrieved it with Steve Barron to pose with his XS Sights-equipped Marlin .30-30 along with my XS Sight Systems cap. Because of the danger it posed, the snake was then dispatched by Gunsite Instructor, Ed Head.

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Awesome Weapons

Continued from page 61

handful of [M855] .556. Sometimes, only one round per kill.

"Basically, it's a force-multiplier," said Sokol, a 6-foot 7-inch former defensive tackle at the United States Naval Academy, Class of '94, who saw first hand the effect the new rifle had on the morale of enemy troops.

"It's very destructive psychologically to have guys dropping around you at 800 meters, and not be engaged by a large group," said Sokol.

Since the war, the number of Marines in 1/5 with ACOG- equipped M16A4s has more than doubled. Each of the three line companies, Alpha, Bravo and Charlie, now has 20 designated shooters with the new rifle.

But some Marines complain about the effectiveness of M855 5.56 ball ammunition for the rifles.

In an after-action report obtained by SOF, Captain Keven E. Yeo, commanding officer of Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines wrote, "The [M855] 5.56 ball at times over-penetrated individual enemy, but did not necessarily stop the individual's actions."

Captain Yeo also said M855 5.56 ball ammunition also proved incapable of penetrating hasty enemy positions within buildings. The average building in Iraq is made of brick and plaster with walls 12-to-16-inches thick. During 60 days of operations in Iraq, Yeo's company engaged enemy personnel from ranges of 20m to 400m in various types of terrain. His experience in combat led him to conclude that ammunition capable of penetrating enemy fortifications and stopping individuals with one shot is probably not available to the average Marine.

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That's why shooters like Cpl. Fulton would like to get their hands on the Designated Marksman Rifle that is currently being deployed by the Marine Corps to explosive- ordnance disposal teams, military police battalions and anti-terrorism force-protection units in the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

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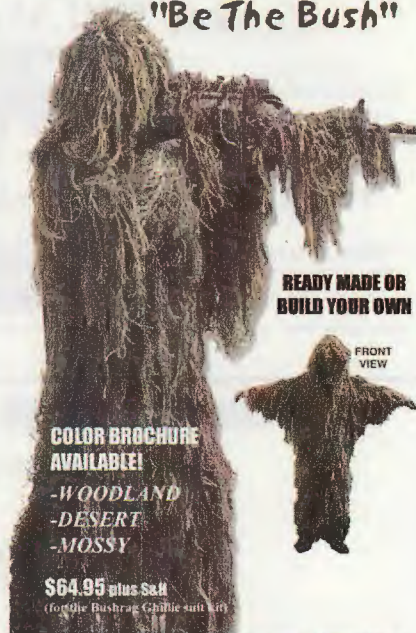
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pressor and will use both 10- and 20-round magazines. The "basic" DMR [i.e. less sight, magazine, sling, basic issue items, cleaning gear, suppressor and bipod] weighs 11 pounds, or a bit less.

Fulton will probably never get his hands on the DMR. It will be employed by Scout/Sniper teams, but only when mission requirements dictate the need for a weapon capable of delivering rapid accurate fire against multiple targets at greater ranges and with greater lethality than the M16A2.

Not Enough Punch

Simply put, Fulton says the M855 .223 round fired by the new M16A4s simply don't pack enough punch. Even expert marksmen like Fulton and McFarling had to shoot Iraqi soldiers several times. Some of the Saddam Fedeyeen were high on cocaine, and just like Timex watches, took a hit and kept on ticking. Other enemy soldiers had so much adrenaline rushing through their bloodstream, they were oblivious to the small-caliber hits.

Comparing the lethality of a M855 .223 round to a 7.62mm NATO round is like comparing a 9mm round to a .45-caliber round.

"A .45 is gonna stop a person dead in their tracks. A 9mm is only gonna slow 'em down," said Sergeant Fulton who is now an instructor at the Marine Corps School of Infantry at Camp Pendleton.

If riflemen like Sgt. Fulton can't get their hands on the DMR, he says the M16A4 with ACOG will satisfy his needs.

However, he would like to see the A4 fitted with a heavier barrel and a bipod, like the DMR.

Dale B. Cooper is a long-time contributor to Soldier Of Fortune. ✕

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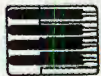


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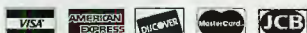


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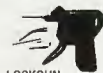


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Command Guidance

Continued from page 6

selves in for Silver Stars.

General Schoomaker, this is madness — and you have to put a full stop to it right now. Because this is what happens when lawyers, not shooters, run the military.

This is what happens in the politically correct world in which a Secretary of the Army (Togo West) hires a consultant who actually drafts a report stating that the Army needs to become less aggressive and more in touch with its feminine side.

This is what happens when the Army culture replaces risk-taking and initiative with hundreds of pages of rules and regulations that hamper war-fighting, degrade unit integrity, and place inane limits on how soldiers can or cannot conduct themselves in battle.

This is what happens when managers and systems analysts replace warriors in the command structure.

This is what happens when somewhere along the chain of command, the idea that war is about killing people and breaking things gets completely lost. This is what happens when the Army forgets the words of General George S. Patton, Jr.: "We must be eager to kill, to inflict on the enemy — the hated enemy — wounds, death, and destruction."

Now, I'm not in favor of hooking prisoners up to field telephones — although it has certainly happened in the past. Nor am I in favor of taking the Argentine approach to interrogation, i.e., tossing one prisoner out of a chopper 10,000 feet above the South Atlantic and then posing the question to the second prisoner in the chopper.

Moreover, Lt. Col. West's actions came nowhere close to anything that can be called torture. Aggressive? Obviously. Outside the box? Absolutely. But aren't those qualities precisely the qualities we want in our officers?

Because if I were a soldier serving under West's command, I'd say HOOAH, Colonel, and follow him to hell. Why? Because Lt. Col. West demonstrated something that far too few of today's officers are willing to demonstrate to their men and women: loyalty **DOWN** the chain of command.

Lt. Col. West put his soldiers' lives above his own career. That sort of behavior deserves to be praised and rewarded, not given eight years and a dishonorable discharge. ✕

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SOUND OFF

by Col. David H. Hackworth, USA (Ret.)

Have Vest, Will Loan

My British-made bulletproof Tetranike vest served me well in the badlands of ex-Yugoslavia, Somalia and Latin America back in my days as a war correspondent — that is, before darling wife, Eilhys, changed the drill.

But that doesn't mean the vest is also retired. No siree. Since 9-11, my trusty Tetranike has served one tour with the Army in Afghanistan and three in Iraq; with the Army, FBI and presently protecting a retired "snake-eater" who's training the Iraqi police force.

The reason that sucker's so well-traveled is that the Bush administration just can't get its priorities right when it comes to giving each and every one of our soldiers the right stuff to kick-up the odds of their making it through the hit-and-run hell of insurgent combat.

About 40,000 of our sons and daughters in harm's way in Iraq actually have to buy, borrow, beg or go without adequate body armor because a bumbling Pentagon bureaucracy hasn't been issuing 100 percent of our troops the very best full-metal jacket money can buy — even though the money has been long appropriated.

Worried moms and pops are sending vests to their kids in care packages that in other conflicts contained cookies and Kool-Aid. A manufacturer's ad in *Army Magazine* says it all: "Our vest could be the best four pounds a soldier ever gained."

The latest vests — worn by a large percentage of our luckier grunts — are composed of layered sheets of Kevlar with pockets in front and back for ceramic plates to protect vital organs and will stop a point-blank 7.62 small-arms fire. One-third lighter than the Vietnam-type gear, they, of course, aren't the final solution, but they're far better than anything else the engineers have cooked-up to date.

Our soldiers swear by them — and so do the docs. Body armor saves lives and has well-demonstrated its bullet- and shrapnel-stopping efficiency in bad places like Somalia, Afghanistan, and now daily in Iraq — where so far about 2,000 soldiers have been killed or wounded.

If these more modern flak jackets aren't preventing hundreds of legs and arms from being blown off — keeping the docs at Army hospitals like Walter Reed burning the midnight oil — at least they're standing between more of our kids and the morgue.

But too many troopers in Iraq tell me they still have



Vietnam-era antiques that are about as effective as wrapping cotton batting around their torsos.

The reason for this Pentagon criminal negligence is twofold: First, the \$310 million Congress approved for the vests got parked at various places, where bucks were siphoned-off for noncombat-related items; and second, the Army has treated the vest issue the way it handles routine requisitions, such as portable toilets and tent poles.

"Soldiers For The Truth" executive, retired Marine Lt. Col. Roger Charles, was dead on target when he said, "The Pentagon has handled the replacement of body armor as though it's a routine general-issue item."

A few years back, the top supply brass decided to implement a one-for-one exchange of new

vests for old vests. Apparently, the realities of Afghanistan and Iraq still haven't hit the radar screen of these logistics wizards, so biz-as-usual continues to be the order of the day — despite the mounting casualties.

Congress [at press time has approved] \$87.5 billion for the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan. But Bush & Company haven't included one penny for body armor, even though the cost of the extraordinary security precautions on the president's recent Asian tour would cover a vest for every soldier [sent] to the Iraqi sand traps.

For sure, enough cash would be skimmed-off that giant pile of taxpayer dough to fix this critical problem if Rummy, Gen. Richard Myers and a few of the Pentagon supply generals were outfitted with obsolete vests and sent off with our serving heroes to patrol the mean streets of Iraq.

The vests would suddenly be exchanged as quickly as Abrams tanks' and Bradley Fighting Vehicles' tracks get replaced — with U.S. plants working three shifts and the heavy tracks then rushed by air to the battlefield.

Which is the way it always should be.

If we don't take care of our troops, how can they take care of us?

www.hackworth.com is the address of David Hackworth's homepage.

Sign in for the free weekly *Defending America* column at his Web site. Send mail to P.O. Box 11179, Greenwich, CT 06831. His newest book is *Steel My Soldiers' Hearts*.

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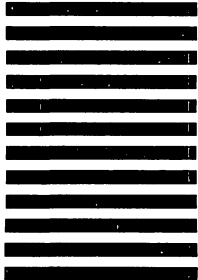
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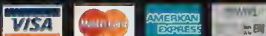
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